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# A F R I C A

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## THE VILLAGE HEADMAN IN BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA<sup>1</sup>

### I. INTRODUCTION

MAX GLUCKMAN

THE Rhodes-Livingstone Institute is attempting a comparative study of the tribes of British Central Africa and of the processes of change affecting their lives to-day. Social anthropologists have been sent to tribes selected both for the variety of forms in their indigenous social organization and for the different ways in which they have been absorbed in the modern world-system. Though we, of the Institute's staff, are spread over thousands of square miles, and have had very different trainings, we have tried to collect our data on comparable bases and to study similar problems. This short symposium, which opens what we have come to consider a crucial problem, is the first-fruits of our collaboration.<sup>2</sup>

Many District Officers have described the village headman as the invaluable Non-Commissioned Officer of native administration. Yet despite various references

<sup>1</sup> The papers which form this article were read at a joint meeting of the Royal Anthropological Institute and the International African Institute on 4 May 1948.

<sup>2</sup> The most important published anthropological studies of the region by students who were not officers of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute are: E. W. Smith and A. Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia*, London, 1920; C. M. Doke, *The Lambas of Northern Rhodesia*, London, 1931; F. Melland, *In Witchbound Africa*, London, 1923; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, London, 1939, and *Bemba Marriage and Modern Economic Conditions*, Livingstone, 1940, as well as many papers; and G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change: Based on Observations in Central Africa*, Cambridge, 1945, *Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa*, Livingstone, 1939, and *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Livingstone, 1940, as

well as several papers; V. Brelsford, *Fishermen of the Bangweulu Swamps*, Livingstone, 1946. Institute officers have studied and have published on: Broken Hill township (the late Godfrey Wilson, first Director); Barotseland, Tonga of Mazabuka and Lamba (Max Gluckman, formerly Assistant Anthropologist, then Director, now Lecturer in Oxford University); Ngoni of Fort Jameson and Lamba (J. A. Barnes); Tonga of Mazabuka (Elizabeth Colson, now Director); Yao and Lamba (J. C. Mitchell); Hera tribe among the Shona of Southern Rhodesia (J. F. Holleman). I. Cunnison is beginning a study of the Lunda of the Luapula Valley. The present symposium was worked out in close collaboration with our colleagues, Dr. Colson and Mr. Cunnison. We are grateful to the Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford University, for its stimulating criticism of our field reports.



in earlier literature to his important political, legal, and ritual responsibility for his dependants, there has not yet been an adequate appreciation of his key position in the social structure.

Many tribes of different cultures live in the region now known as British Central Africa (Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland). East African peoples have entered between the Great Lakes and there has been a steady stream of migration from what are now the Belgian Congo and Angola. In the nineteenth century three groups of Southern Bantu, halted by the Europeans on the Great Fish River, marauded back into the region which they had earlier traversed southwards: the Ndebele, the Ngoni, and the Sotho Kololo who temporarily conquered the Lozi masters of Barotseland. Except for a few Bushmen all the peoples are Bantu-speaking, but their social systems are very varied. The Tonga of Mazabuka have a stateless polity which lacks even the framework of a segmentary lineage structure, such as is found among many West and East African peoples. Their political communities are ritually linked in ephemeral bonds to rain-shrines which themselves are short-lived.<sup>1</sup> The Ila relatives of the Tonga live in large villages which are in a constant state of feud with one another. There are large substantially homogeneous states such as that of the Bemba, and kingdoms like the Lozi and Ngoni which embrace members of many tribes. Types of kinship grouping are equally varied. The Bemba and most of the Congo tribes are matrilineal and matrilocal, as are the Yao who came from East Africa. The Ila-Tonga, of whose ancestral home we know nothing, are matrilineal but dominantly patrilocal. The north-eastern peoples (Inamwanga, Mambwe) are patrilineal and patrilocal, including the Nyakyusa and Ngonde with their unusual age-village system. Also patrilineal and patrilocal are the Shona, as were the southern invaders: Ndebele, Ngoni, and Kololo. The Lozi have a patrilineal bias, but among them descent, inheritance, and residence go in all lines. These tribes live in a great variety of environments and their modes of production, and the economic and physical settings of their settlements, vary correspondingly. Many of them are slash-and-burn shifting cultivators, who are constantly moving their villages in pursuit of virgin or regenerated woodland. There are fishing-peoples by the lakes and in the swamps. The Ila inhabit the cultivable margins of a vast flood-plain into which they drive their herds to temporary camps; the Lozi, who live in a similar plain but escape from the flood-waters to temporary homes on the margins, have a complicated system of gardening, fishing, and pasturing.

One social group occurs in all the tribes, whatever their environment and whatever their other forms of social organization. This is the village—a discrete group of people who reside in usually adjacent huts, who recognize allegiance to a headman, and who have a corporate identity against other similar groups. It is significant that the root of the word 'village' is common to practically all Bantu languages.

Most of the inhabitants of any village in any tribe are related to the headman and to one another. Some may be related to the headman indirectly through other members of the village. A few strangers are found in some villages and in the past there were domestic slaves who were ultimately absorbed as relatives and who were generally treated as such. The village is thus a corporate group of relatives. In any

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Colson, 'Rain-shrines among the Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia', *Africa*, xviii, No. 4 (1948).



Bantu tribe cognatic kinship and affinity spread widely over the land, interlinking individuals with each other in an infinitely complicated and intricate web of relationships. This web of kinship is peculiar to, and unique for, every individual, except twins of the same sex. Even for these twins it diverges when they marry. Therefore the actual kinship relationships between people are ephemeral, though the kinship system itself is not. In most tribes one or another set of kinship links forms the basis of groups which persist through time, in that the groups endure while they lose old members through death and departures and absorb new members by birth and adoption. Groups of this kind often are formed on a frame of unilateral descent, giving the lineage which is typical of the Southern Bantu, North-east Africa, most West African peoples, the Arabs, and so on. Among these peoples segments of kin-groups are the nuclei of local groups such as villages, wards, and districts. The corporate-kinship and territorial systems tend to coincide, and village headmen hold office by genealogical position in a segmentary system. The lineage, defined in this way, is not general for Central Africa, and where it does occur it is shallow in depth and unites only small numbers of people. But whether or not there are these 'lineages', we do find corporate groups of kindred, the inhabitants of the villages. They are formed crucially by common allegiance to the headman. The kinship links between the headman and his followers may vary from tribe to tribe, or within a tribe, and within a single village there may be different kinds of kinsmen, but the headman is always regarded as a senior kinsman. Save in royal villages belonging to the chief, he obtains his position by right of inheritance within a kinship system, be it by patriliney, matriliney, or by choice from either of these lines. With the headmanship of the village he inherits wealth, such as cattle or slaves or land, which he has to administer in the interests of his villagers. Where land is limited he is frequently responsible for allocating it. He is consulted in matters of marriage and of work. He may have ritual duties to perform on behalf of the villagers.

The village is a kinship and domestic organization in which subsistence peasants make their living and spend most of their time, and where it is proper for a man to die. Since it is formed by common allegiance to the headman, he occupies a crucial position in the frame of domestic and kinship relations. In many Central African tribes villages may consist of a number of alien groups held together by their common, if variant, attachment to the headman. This will be made clear in Mitchell's analysis of the Yao village. The Yao are spreading steadily into unworked land. They live in villages composed of a number of matrikin-groups of little depth and of differing origin. One set of these kin groups is descended from the wives of headmen who alone marry patrilocally, the other set from the sisters of headmen. We believe this to be the internal constitution of a number of our other matrilineal peoples. The Lozi<sup>1</sup> build their villages on small islands in the vast flood-plain of the Upper Zambezi. These villages therefore have histories of hundreds of years, though the limited size of the islands and of the gardens and fishing-sites attached to them has prevented any village population from becoming very numerous. There is a constant flow of kindred out of and into each village, in an ever-changing pattern, for the Lozi inherit in all their lines of ancestry. But at any one moment each village is a corporate

<sup>1</sup> See my *Economy of the Central Barotse Plain*, Livingstone, 1941, and *Essays on Lozi Land and Royal Property*, Livingstone, 1943.



group of kinsmen, united under the dominance of their headman. The Tonga village is made up of a very varied set of kindred, joined under a headman.<sup>1</sup> In the Nyakyusa age-village, composed of a number of contemporaries, the election of the headman is of fundamental importance.<sup>2</sup>

Internally the village has a kinship constitution; it is also a political unit. Indeed, we regard it as the smallest group which may be thus described. Until recently its political importance has been enhanced by Government rules using villages as units of administration and usually compelling all Africans to live in villages of defined minimum sizes. We judge from early travellers' reports that the village-group has always been characteristic of, and important in, the region. In organized kingdoms the headman was held responsible for his followers to the chief, and their allegiance to the chief in most relations was expressed through their village membership. The headman also represented their interests against other villages. Usually he held a somewhat unorganized court to settle disputes within the village, or joined with the headman of some other village when two of their followers were disputing. Among the strongly organized Lozi it is considered best that a quarrel within a village should be settled by the headman, and not come to the capital. I have frequently heard councillors stressing this to litigants and exhorting headmen on how to govern wisely and impartially. The headman in these kingdoms thus stands at the bottom of the political organization and is an essential part of it. In the stateless tribes, as the centre of village unity, he has equal political importance.

The headman's crucial position in the frame of political relations is not a mere administrative one. Politically he symbolizes the corporate identity of the village and where it forms part of an organized state he should attend its members in disputes at the capital. All the tribes of the region attach very high value to 'the big village', and the village is identified with the headman. Often it takes his name which is inherited. New villages crystallize about leaders who become the headmen and are not amorphous groups; when people move between villages they go to join a headman. The desire to attain headmanship and its adherents is a dominant ambition throughout. In addition, the ordinary person considers it desirable to belong to as big a village as he can. The maintaining of a village's harmony and numbers are themes that are constantly praised, and it is the headman's onerous task to try to achieve this. His people express through him their desire for political importance, which is rated by a headman's following and his position in the prestige system. Meanwhile heads of subordinate sections themselves wish to become headmen. The villages are constantly riven by witchcraft charges, which are a reflex of tensions between and within their component groups. The headman is particularly susceptible to the charge of using witchcraft, and believes himself most liable to attack by witches. Dr. Smith and Captain Dale in their classic study quoted the Ila definition 'chieftainship is serfdom'; and the burdens and uneasiness of authority, from chief to headman, are stressed in all our tribes. The Lozi Paramount Chief and the Ngoni village headman both describe their appointment in the words, 'you have killed me'. Barnes's analysis will elaborate this theme.

<sup>1</sup> W. Allan, M. Gluckman, C. G. Trapnell, and D. U. Peters, *Land-holding among the Plateau Tonga of Mazabuka District*, Cape Town, 1948.

<sup>2</sup> G. Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society' in *Bantu Studies*, vol. x, No. 3 (1936), at p. 276.



For lack of space, we cannot here describe in detail the external relationships of villages to one another. In brief, we see the political systems of these peoples as being rooted in the self-assertion of villages, the smallest corporate units, against one another. Among the Ngoni, for example, people sit at beer-drinks by villages, and villagers help one another in fights. Village herdboys pit their bulls against one another. Village-loyalty, despite internal divisions, is strong against other villages, and tensions inside the group are balanced against external pressures. In the past, people lived in villages, they say, for protection against enemies. These were not only external foes—foreign tribes, slavers, wild animals—but also sorcerers and the spirits of the bush. This indicates that though the economic and political setting of the village may vary between tribes, it is also, *sui generis*, a basic element of social structure.

The hypothesis on which we are basing our future work is that the delicacy of the headman's position arises from conflicting principles. First, it arises from his position within the village group as such, even though the ties and obligations involved vary from tribe to tribe. But the main source of the ambivalence of his situation is that he is the personality in whom the domestic-kinship and the political systems intersect. A very simple illustration is that if a man goes to settle in a distant kinsman's village, he enters into a group with whose members he has personal and specific ties of kinship. He also becomes a subject of the headman in a specific sense. The headman is the senior kinsman in a group of kinsmen interrelated in various ways, but who have corporate bonds in their common allegiance to him. These bonds are political in kingdoms since the chief recognizes them; in stateless tribes, they are the main political bonds. Thus a headman is entangled in the web of kinship links and yet has power of another kind, either from the chief or as an autonomous political leader, in relation to the same set of people. The sanctions on him are dual: the diffuse moral sanctions of kinship, and the organized and legal sanctions supported by political authority.

On the other hand, there is a general tendency to speak of political allegiance in kinship terms. Africans say that 'the chief is father of his people' and speak of the kingdom as 'the chief's village'. There appears to us to be a fundamental extension of links from the village to the kingdom as such, and we consider that the headman's position is the key to understanding the relation of kinship links and political bonds in these tribes.

We suggest then that we need a far more intensive analysis than has yet been made of the headman's structural role, both in his personal and in his dual corporate links. He interlocks two distinct systems of social relations and therefore the attitudes of his followers to him are fundamentally ambivalent. He symbolizes their common corporate values and yet he is caught personally in their internal struggles. The chief stands largely outside the struggles of the groups and persons he unites; the headman is closely involved in every matter over which he should preside impartially. Therefore it appears to us that the ritual he undergoes is likely to reflect in its symbolism hostility as much as unity.

The difficulties of the headman's position are enormously aggravated in the modern political system. In the past he and his followers, with their neighbours and the chief, held a common set of values. They do not accept the values of the dominant modern



authorities to-day: those of the British administration. Yet the headman is a key official, if usually unpaid, in that administration. For example, he has to report suspicious deaths and illnesses and strangers, and he has to see that his villagers keep the village clean, hoe paths, use latrines, follow agricultural and veterinary regulations, pay tax, &c. He is no more ready than they are to accept these as good, but he tries to enforce the rules for he is liable to be punished if he does not, by fining, imprisonment, and ultimately deposition. As he applies these unwelcome and unaccepted rules, his position becomes subject to still greater strains.

## II. THE YAO OF SOUTHERN NYASALAND

*J. C. MITCHELL*

THE Yao people were notorious at the end of last century because of their reputation as slavers. Livingstone had noted their close association with the Arabs in this trade and much of the effort of the early administrators of Nyasaland was directed to suppressing the slaving activities of the Yao. While the slave trade has been fairly well studied, the associated but different phenomenon of domestic slavery has not been nearly so thoroughly investigated. It seems that domestic slavery was an important part of the Yao social structure in those days, before the coming of the white man abolished at one stroke this and many other social institutions. But, though the institution of domestic slavery ceased to exist, the system of values upon which it was built still survives and still affects the social structure of the modern Yao. We might summarize this system of values by saying that the status of a man depends on the number of people over whom he exercises certain rights and for whom, in turn, he is responsible. In the past, a man could increase his status in the community by acquiring slaves. This he did by buying them with calico obtained through the slave trade, or with ivory, beeswax, tobacco, and other natural products; by taking them in compensation for the death of a relative; or simply by kidnapping them. Slaves were often taken as spouses by the members of the group over which the man exercised his command, or by the man himself as wives, and thus the group was further enlarged by natural increase. Though these slaves and slave-children had fairly well-defined rights, they were not free to leave the command of their owner, and the group was from that point of view a stable one. The leader's command over his matrilineal and other relatives, however, was not so absolute and it is with this aspect of the social structure that I am here concerned. This system of values still persists and forms the basis for evaluating the status of men in the Yao community. The high status of a village headman is usually expressed in such terms as: 'He is a big man—he has many people', or 'he has many huts'. The village headman himself and the men under him are motivated by the same system of values so that in any village at any time there is a balance between the desire of certain members of that village to break away and establish units with their own dependants, and the desire of the headman to retain those people under his charge.

The tensions that exist in this situation are well recognized by the Yao and they always express them explicitly during the ceremonial succession to village headman-



ship. The difficulties of his position are brought home to the neophyte village headman in speeches made by old and experienced men. On one such occasion I heard a man say, 'Some men who marry into a village are bad and can split a village like this one by telling lies to the headman, saying that his sisters are talking behind his back and are insulting him. When a headman hears all this he might break his village by ill-treating his relatives, thus causing himself to be left all alone.' In this way the headman's responsibility for maintaining harmonious relations between the members of the village and himself is emphasized. His failure to do so results in what they call a break in the village—the departure of some of the members to live elsewhere—which is a severe blow to the status of the headman. In fact, he is dependent on his dependants for status, and the Yao are quick to point this out to neophyte headmen, saying, 'A tree cannot grow without branches.'

We can better understand the situation if we consider the social structure of the Yao village a little more closely. The Yao are a matrilineal people and are dominantly matrilineal. They live in small groups of huts scattered fairly evenly over the country and from a few hundred yards to possibly a mile or so apart. Such clusters may contain as few as five or as many as sixty or more huts, occupied by between 20 and 200 people.

These people are almost always kinsfolk, and in the smaller villages they are usually all either matrilineal descendants of a common ancestress or their spouses. In the larger groups there is a more complex situation which I shall analyse below. In the simpler groups there may be no male matrilineal descendant in the village and the leadership of the group is taken over by a senior female descendant of the founder of the village. Usually, however, if the group is large, one of the male matrilineal descendants lives patrilocally in the village and assumes leadership.

The relationship between a male matrilineal descendant and the female matrilineal descendants who are in his charge is signified by the word '*mbumba*'. The word particularly refers to the relationship between a man and his sisters and I have therefore translated it as 'sorority-group'. It includes a man's full sisters, matrilineal female collaterals (whom he calls sisters), their female children, and the female children of those female children, and so on. It is usually used in the sense of 'somebody's sorority-group'. A man belonging to the descent-group of the sorority-group may refer to these women as 'our sorority-group'. The man who is in charge of the sorority-group is referred to as the *asyene mbumba*. This could be translated as 'owner of the sorority-group' but because of the property associations with the word 'owner' in our language, I have instead translated this as 'warden of the sorority-group' which expresses more accurately the relationship between a man and his female relatives. Even in those groups where there is a female in charge of the village and no male matrilineal descendant is resident in the group, there is usually some one man, possibly married in some other village, who is warden of the sorority-group. The warden of a sorority-group has certain precise duties to perform on behalf of his charges. First, he is concerned with the good relations between members of the sorority-group and with other such groups. He has to settle most of the domestic quarrels that take place between members of the sorority-groups. Second, and this is considered to be a most important function, he is the person who is the



marriage-surety for the marriages of the members of the group. Briefly this means that he must be approached before a marriage can be legally contracted by any member of his charge, he or his representative is present at the ceremony which formally announces the marriage, and he is responsible for the behaviour of his female relative in that marriage. Third, he is immediately concerned with the physical welfare and health of his sorority-group. He must track down the sorcerers causing their illnesses and supply the medicine to heal them. He has to arrange for the ritual purification of mourners after the death of one of the sorority-group's members. Fourth, he must be present in the court-house if one of his charges is involved in a case and he is usually looked to for the money for the fine. I have known a case not to begin because the warden of the sorority-group was not present. Frequently if the husbands of the female members of his charge default, he has to provide the hut-tax money.

Usually the warden of the sorority-group is the eldest brother of a group of adult full sisters. The younger brothers of the group of sisters, while concerned with their welfare, do not stand in this particular responsible position. They refer to the sorority-group as 'our sorority-group'. The elder brother refers to the sorority-group, be it noted, as 'my sorority-group', and this sets him over and against his younger brothers. The position that the warden holds, however, is not rigidly fixed, for a younger brother may assume control of the sorority-group if for some reason he is dissatisfied with the way in which affairs are being conducted, and is able so to assert himself.

If we recall that the status of a man in a Yao community is determined by the number of dependants that he can command, it is easy to see that relationships between an elder brother and his younger brother are distinctive. The elder brother is responsible for the actions of his younger brother in much the same way as he is for one of his sorority-group, and the younger brothers have a great emotional attachment to their older brothers. Yet at the same time the elder brother stands in the way of the younger brother in his striving for status, in that while the elder brother is warden of the sorority-group the younger brother cannot be, and therefore cannot have dependants and status. It is not surprising to find that accusations of sorcery are frequently made between brothers and the result often is that the younger brother takes the sorority-group away from his sorcerer brother to some other place and sets up a new village with it. Therefore, one possible source of instability in a Yao village lies in the operation of the kinship system in a system of values which reckons status by adherents.

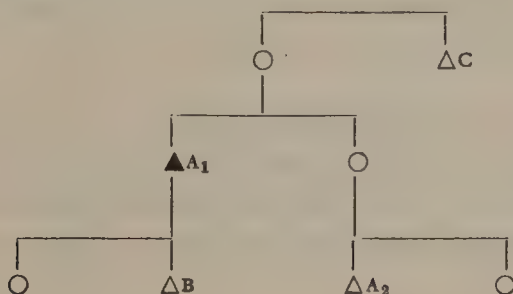
I have thus far been describing the simpler types of village. In the larger groups it is common for the warden of the sorority-group to live in the village where his sorority-group is. Then he usually brings one (or sometimes more) of his wives to the village, where she lives patrilocally. The daughters that are born to her do not return to the sorority-group from which the headman's wife came but marry and set up households near their mother in the village of their father. Thus there develops in time a second sorority-group in the village, alongside the first sorority-group, and related to it through the headman. At this point we may say that the man's position has changed from that of headman of a village containing a single sorority-group, to the more complicated and less secure one of village headman over a more hetero-



genous group, in which his jurisdiction over one part of the village arises from his position as the warden of a sorority-group, and that which he exercises over the other sorority-group derives partly from his position as a non-matrilineal relative and partly from his own personal qualities. The warden of the second sorority-group is the headman's own son and it is he who takes over all the functions proper to that position, but the successor to the headmanship is a man's sister's son, usually, though not invariably, the first-born son of the eldest sister. Each village headman in turn brings his wife to live in his village and each headman's wife in turn tends to set up a fresh group which is of a different lineage affiliation from that of the headman. In addition to this the warden of the sorority-group formed from the first headman's children tends in due course to live patrilocally and the children of his wife set up yet another foreign group in the village. Hence, theoretically, with each generation the number of opposed groups in a village doubles itself, and in a few generations, were this to continue, the position would become extremely complex. In fact a village of long standing is seen to be composed of a central lineage group to which the headman belongs, and a series of other lineage groups related to the headman's lineage group through one or other of the past and present headmen of that village. Such groups of different lineage make-up are usually mutually opposed and are held together only by the combined influences of a weak patrilineal connexion with the headman's lineage and the personality of the present headman.

This situation is clearly an uneasy one for the headman. His wife is looked upon as a stranger and is often made to feel it. The headman's sorority-group often expresses its hostility and jealousy towards her. The children of the two groups are on no easier terms. They call each other 'cross-cousin' (*asiwani*) and are expected to marry one another. At the same time the hostility between them is formulated in joking relationships. This critical situation of the headman is made clear to him on the day of his succession. One headman was told: 'As you have got wives, do not listen to what they say. They may be lying. Sometimes they will quarrel with your sisters and say that your sisters have been insulting you. This is false. When you hear these reports you may be unfair to your sisters and the people will say that you have broken your village through listening to nonsense.' Thus when conflicts arise between members of a village the headman is in a peculiar position and it is difficult for him to remain impartial. In such a situation the tendency is to call in an outsider to try to settle the differences. Sometimes these differences are patched up and the village continues as a unit. But, particularly after the death of the first village headman, the tendency is for one of the groups to move away to a completely new area, there to set up a unit of its own.

I quote an actual case to illustrate this procedure:





'In 1946 village A had about 30 huts in it. A certain man B was the son of the previous headman called  $A_1$  and hence mother's brother's son or cross-cousin of the present headman called  $A_2$ . B had two wives living patrilocally and while B was serving in the Army he had a letter from one of his sisters (i.e. his mother's brother's daughter or cross-cousin to the headman) to say that  $A_2$  was sleeping with B's wives. When B returned he started making inquiries from his wives and he eventually secured a confession from them. B then went to a man called C, who stood in the relationship of mother's brother to the original  $A_1$  and complained about the behaviour of the village headman. C also instituted inquiries and ascertained that it was true. C then approached a local headman of some standing (whom I shall call D) and asked him to arbitrate in the case. D pronounced  $A_2$  guilty and awarded compensation of £6. 10s. to B. B, however, refused to take the money, and said that he wished to leave the village. D observed that he had every right to do this and that  $A_2$  had no right to complain 'since he had broken the village himself'. B took his sorority-group, who occupied about twenty of the thirty huts, to a place about thirty miles away and set up a village of his own. The sorority-group of the village headman  $A_2$  remained behind in the old village.'

This case illustrates the points that I have made. It shows how the two groups in this village stand opposed to each other in that B's sister wrote to tell him of  $A_2$ 's conduct. Also when the village did break up it did so along certain very clear lines of genealogical relationship. Second, it illustrates the operation of the desire for dependants in that B refused what by Yao standards is a very large sum of money for compensation and preferred to move off and establish a village of his own. This attitude is also shown by the arbitrator who takes the point of view that regrettable as it is, the village must in the circumstances split, and while he appreciates the headman's feelings he makes it clear that the headman has no one to blame but himself. Third, it is interesting to note that this split took place after the death of the old village headman when the personal ties with both opposed groups were severed. Though the new village headman  $A_2$  assumes the kinship terms of his predecessor and also calls the children of  $A_1$  'children' yet in fact he is their cross-cousin while the old village headman was their father.

The position of the village headman in Yao social structure may be summarized thus: the village headman is the leader of a group which may be a simple kin-group or a composite group of two or more opposed matrilineages linked to each other through himself or one of his predecessors whom he represents to them. The numerical size of the village determines the status of the headman, but the size that it can reach is limited by an immanent instability in the kinship structure which is expressed, in terms of their status system, first, in the competition of brothers for the wardenship of the sorority-group, and second, in the competition between the headman and the wardens of the patrilineally linked sorority-groups, who wish to set up villages of their own.

The Yao see villages as units and this is clearly shown at the initiation ceremonies of boys, when the initiates are kept in grass-sheds, each partition of which refers to a particular village. In the same way a person is identified as belonging to a particular village known by the name of the village headman. Thus a man might say: 'I come from Kumpumbe's village.'



Village headmen themselves are graded in importance and there are certain marks of rank which distinguish the more important headmen. We have already examined one of the most obvious ways in which the village headman's importance is judged, that is, by the number of people in his village. In addition there are other ways in which village headmen may be distinguished both from the common people and from less important headmen. Thus, for example, some of the more important village headmen have the right to conduct initiation ceremonies, this right being granted to them by the man who is in a way the most important village headman of all—the Chief. The right to hold a boys' initiation ceremony (*lupanda*) is of more importance than the right to hold a girls' initiation ceremony (*ciputu*). Yet another mark of rank is the right to wear a plain crimson band around the forehead (*mlangali*), this right also being granted by the Chief.

The Administration has recognized the more important village headmen and has entrusted to them certain duties. By no means all the people called 'village headmen' in this paper are recognized as such by the Administration, but I do not know of any person who has the right to wear a red band and is not also an Administrative village headman.

The status system has apparently been taken over from pre-European days, but it is uncertain to what extent these important village headmen had powers. Some to-day have all the marks of rank that the Chief has, i.e., they hold both boys' and girls' initiation ceremonies, are entitled to the special greeting accorded to important village headmen (*subahe*), wear a red band, have the right to be buried in the village and not in the common cemeteries, and to have their bodies prepared for interment by people of similar rank. It appears that such people exercised a certain amount of power, by reason of their personal qualities, over less powerful neighbours, and some were able in the past to demonstrate their autonomy by moving off to establish petty chiefdoms of their own.

Nowadays the Administrative village headmen have certain statutory duties to perform towards other minor groups actually independent but considered, for the purposes of the Administration, to belong to the village. The relative importance of the headman is still the deciding factor in such questions as determining who is to be called in to arbitrate in a case. Thus, though for Administrative purposes a small village may be considered to be a part of a larger Administrative village under an Administrative village headman, yet when a case for arbitration occurs within that smaller village, some other person than the Administrative village headman may be called in as arbitrator.

Laws promulgated by the Administration are conveyed through the Chief to the Administrative village headman and in this way a hierarchy of power is being introduced. The small village headman now sees the Administrative village headman as a representative of the Chief and the Administration. The Administrative village headman in turn sees the Chief in this light. But in matters directly affecting the Administration, the small village headman also sees the Administrative village headman as his own representative *vis-à-vis* the Chief and the Administration.

In general the village is by far the most important corporate body in the social organization of the Yao, not only as a significant primary group but also as an element



in the political sphere. The position of the village headman therefore is of cardinal importance and merits further study.

### III. THE FORT JAMESON NGONI

J. A. BARNES

THE Fort Jameson Ngoni live in the Eastern Province of Northern Rhodesia under Chief Mpezeni, and number about 60,000 people. Their villages range in size from half a dozen up to about 120 huts, corresponding to a population range of about 15 to 300. The distance from one village to the next may be as little as ten yards or as much as a mile and a half. Every ten years or so, when the garden-land round the village is exhausted, the villagers move to some new site where fresh gardens can be made and new huts built.

Most of the villages are commoner villages with headmen who succeed patrilineally. It is rare to find anyone in a village who is not related to the headman in one way or another as a kinsman or an affine, and a considerable portion of the inhabitants are his close kin. Marriage residence may, however, be either patrilocal or matrilineal, and intra-village marriages also occur, so that these ties of relationship to the headman are of many different kinds. This diversity is increased by the custom of sending children away from their parents after weaning to live in another village with one of their grandparents, whose village they come to regard as their own. The headman is usually succeeded on his death by his eldest son by his chief wife. If the heir is a minor a brother of the former headman may act as regent, and may be able to secure succession to the headmanship for his own heirs. Alternatively, the legitimate heir may be unwilling to succeed, or universally unpopular, or, more frequently, away at work in Southern Rhodesia, and so may be passed over. A son may be called back from his grandparents' village to take up the headmanship of his father's village.

The headman is responsible to the Chief and the Administration for the well-being of the diverse collection of relatives living in his village. He receives notice of tribal meetings, provides labour for public works, and is responsible for informing the Chief of any incidents of importance that may occur in the village. Litigants from the village get the headman to testify to their good character, and his approval is theoretically required before anyone may move out of or into the village except in connexion with marriage. He arranges hospitality for strangers and should take the initiative in moving the site of the village when necessary. He is responsible for trying to deal with quarrels in the village, but he would in these days be regarded as exceeding his powers if he awarded any monetary damages. There is not the same feeling that the headman ought to settle all quarrels before they reach the Court that is reported in other areas. For a serious quarrel to be discussed in the village without calling in the headman is regarded as challenging his authority.

In return for these services the headman is accorded a certain amount of deference by the Administration and the Chief, and he receives gifts, principally in the form of beer. He does not appear to have the same ritual duties as have been described for Bemba headmen.<sup>1</sup> He is assisted by his deputy and his lieutenants. The deputy is

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. I. Richards, 'The Political System of the Bemba Tribe, North-Eastern Rhodesia' in *African Political Systems* (ed. M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard), London, 1940, at pp. 103-4.



usually a patrilineal kinsman of the same generation. Each successive headman can choose his own deputy, so that the post is not a hereditary one. The lieutenants occupy hereditary posts which were usually created by the founder of the village for the most trusted of his captured followers.

I propose to discuss some of the tensions that exist within a village with a structure such as I have outlined. They are well brought out in a ceremony for installing a new headman's deputy that I attended in July 1947, in a village called Tsong'oto.<sup>1</sup> The headman, Wilson of the Tembo clan, had succeeded in 1926, but had not appointed a deputy of his own as his father's deputy was still alive. There was no obligation on him to adopt this course, but as it happened the man eventually appointed as Wilson's deputy was the son of Wilson's father's deputy, and it would have put him in a rather invidious position had he been appointed while his father was alive, particularly in a medium-sized village like Tsong'oto, containing perhaps 100 people. The father's deputy died about 1936, and nothing was done before the outbreak of war in 1939. Then the deputy-elect, Kondwelani, joined the army and did not return to the village until 1946. In 1947 the adolescent boys of the village decided among themselves that it would be pleasant to hold the ceremony of formal induction of the deputy. Such a ceremony would call for much dancing and beer-drinking and all the adolescent girls of the neighbourhood would come into the village. This project was referred to their elders and the organization of the ceremony was undertaken. Eight women brewed beer.

Prior to the ceremony I had been told that only two people outside the village would be formally invited to attend. One was Kambokonje, the headman of an adjacent village, from which Tsong'oto had hived off in about 1880. The father's father of headman Wilson was the first person called Tsong'oto, and was a lieutenant of a former headman of Kambokonje's village. It was thought that Kambokonje might invite the Chief of the county to attend the ceremony. The other person to be invited by the village was the deputy's mother's elder brother. It was thought that he might invite his paternal half-brother.

The ceremony was announced for a Saturday, but on the Friday night one of the drum-skins split, and in addition the beer failed to come to a head. It was postponed a day to give time for a new skin to be prepared and to give the beer more chance to mature. By 10.30 on Sunday morning about 200 people, men and women, had arrived in the village. They gathered on the verandahs near the deputy's hut and Wilson put down a reed mat under a tree in the middle of the assembly. The local Chief arrived, people came back to the village from church, and without further delay three women came and sat down on the mat with three men sitting down behind them, all facing the deputy's hut. The men were the deputy and two of his brothers, and the three women were their wives. The headman sat down on the verandah of the hut next to the deputy's hut, while the Chief was given a chair at one side of the circle of onlookers. The headman walked into the centre of the gathering and made the opening speech:

'You are many people that have come here to see what is happening here, and I know many of you have come with lies to tell other people when you get back to your homes. I am pleased to see many important people coming to see what is happening here. Everyone knows that I must speak the truth.'

<sup>1</sup> All proper names in this paper are fictitious.



Here the mother of the headman stepped forward and placed a new cloth over the heads of the three women. Her son continued: 'We are proud of seeing this woman. Excuse me, you important people here, among the Chewa tribe, and among the Ngoni it is the same thing that is happening here; among the Chewa it is the custom to throw beads on the ground. Now here everybody can help these people sitting on the mat by giving them money or anything that can be offered to them.'

He sat down and his place was taken by a younger brother of the deputy, who merely said that he was the first to give, put a coin into a plate that had been placed by the headman on the edge of the mat, and sat down again. An old man followed him who said: 'The deputy must fear the real headman. The people in this village are all related. You must leave your knobkerry on the floor. Though you find us wrong, still you must forgive us. See what your elder brother does. There are people who are going away. There are people who are talking this and that. We have grown up as men because we have learnt to respect people. We say *dade* [elder sister] and we respect our mother's mother. Do not curse people. Look at your elder brother. . . . There are your people who will tell you, you will be grown up as from to-day. You must become a man.'

He was followed by a man from another village whose child had married into the headman's family: 'We are all pleased, you Tembo people, to come here because of the new deputy. These are our words. You, my father, ought to know who Tsong'oto is. What Tsong'oto speaks and what you speak must be the same. There are people who will spoil words for you and say that you are a better man than Tsong'oto. If Wilson is wrong, you must discuss the matter with him. The headman does not drink beer, so you must be the eyes of the headman [Wilson was a member of the Dutch Reformed Church whose members do not attend beer parties]. You children of the parents-in-law of our child, do not listen to other people. To-morrow people will come and say, "Do you know what Tsong'oto people are saying?" Wilson was the headman when the village was at a former site and we have heard nothing bad of him. He has never fought. He is just a man like anyone else. But now we have no more words. You would do well to remember Kambokonje, he is the owner. To-day we have sat you on the mat. You have two mothers and you must fear them. [Turning to the women on the mat] Others see you. When you are given a thing, you must say that you have been given a thing. Beer brewed merely for sale is not a good thing. Beer is best when all people are of good heart. Look after the people of Tembo here. The chief is always a woman not a man. [Turning now to the headman] . . . You are the elder, you are the chicken who has laid the eggs. Look after the eggs well. If the deputy's brother tells lies just ask him about it. If you ask people, they will stop telling lies. All these people are your children. You people who are living in the village, the headman is your father and your mother, but beware, the headman also looks after his own interests. Hatch the eggs well.' He put some money in the plate and sat down.

He was followed by a woman, a classificatory mother of the headman, who burst into tears, crying, 'You have won nothing.' She knelt down in front of the mat and continued to weep. Another woman, the daughter of the headman of another village, got up and said, 'Always when you come here you curse me. You don't give me any beer. Stop cursing me from to-day: you always curse me. Why curse a fellow woman?



It would be good to curse if there were a divorce, but don't curse me who drinks in your house.'

The kneeling woman then started to speak, 'I am a woman. If I stop helping you, what will you say? Answer me, Tembo' [addressing the headman].

Headman: 'Everyone must listen to what she says.' She went on, 'You hear from my son, are you deaf? There is now a separation. He is now a big person. People will put troubles in the family. You must tell me. You must talk in the gardens and not take the troubles to our home. They must not ask in Kambokonje village what it is we have done in this village. You often brew beer and you don't give the beer to people. You do the same for her son. You must not do it in your house, you must cook porridge, you must throw away your bad habits from to-day.'

Here there were shouts from the onlookers, 'They won't throw away their bad habits. They won't do it.'

About a dozen speakers, men and women, followed in succession, each proclaiming how ungrateful, miserly, and deceitful were the deputy and his wife and how they must now change their ways. Throughout this harangue the six people on the mat remained completely impassive, their heads bowed slightly, the women with the cloth draped over their heads. Another woman from time to time went up to them and wiped the sweat from their faces with a cloth. After several people had spoken, the Chief sent the councillor, with whom he had arrived, out into the middle to make a speech:

'You are grown to-day and you ought to be a good younger brother to your elder brother. Ask him when you have troubles. Don't be misled by other people in the village who will say what a bad brother he is to you. You are to-day two in your village. You must not carry on these bad things. There are many people here, it is good to look after them.'

After a few more speeches and after a number of people had come up to contribute money without making speeches, the headman got up: 'We must now stop. Everyone is now well instructed. There are well-respected persons here, but if they offend my laws I will not respect them. You killed me in 1926 and it is now 1947. That was 22 years ago. I thought I was alone. God made someone to come and help me. We should therefore thank God. I am just reading words.' He put his Bible on to the ground and started to read from it the passage from St. Matthew's Gospel, 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, But I say unto you resist not evil. . . .'

After finishing the chapter, he expounded it in rather simpler language, ending up ' . . . I know very well there are enemies, but they (who keep Christ's laws) do not fear them. I do not say, you can go away to Southern Rhodesia. In Southern Rhodesia, you will only encounter the same troubles. I have no more words. Thank you for all your words. I am an Nsenga, and in Nsenga we say. . . .' Here he broke into a song in which he was joined by the crowd and at the end said, 'To-day you will say that Wilson is a bad man.' He then called on the people to pray. A prayer was said by a preacher from another village and, with this, the instructional phase of the ceremony may be said to have ended.

The headman announced that there was beer, and called on the people to sit together by villages to drink it. Some old women danced round the village, calling



at the huts of the three principal participants in the ceremony, Wilson, the deputy, and the deputy's brother. Then the crowd broke up and the younger people went off to dance on their own.

We have in this ceremony, I think, a fairly clear exposition of the attitude adopted towards positions of power and responsibility and of the role of the different social personalities that interact within the village social structure. Perhaps we can best begin our analysis by considering the part played by the Chief.

His invitation to attend the ceremony came not directly from Tsong'oto but from Kambokonje, in accordance with the traditional chain of responsibility from commoner through regional governor and royal lieutenant to the Chief. This was the main principle by which civil action was organized before the European conquest. The Chief was referred to from time to time by such phrases as 'the important person who is here', and respect for the Chief was included in the virtues enumerated by the headman. The headman referred to himself as *Nsenga*, thus, by implication, associating himself with his people who, like him, are not Ngoni in the same way as the Chief is Ngoni. At the same time it is the Chief who is the unifying personality, whose rule of law unites the very diverse ethnic elements in Ngoni society. A ceremony such as this is a public ratification of a decision made previously within a smaller group. The presence of the Chief sets the seal on the ratification and reduces the likelihood of the validity of the appointment of the deputy being questioned at a later date. But if he had not come the ceremony would have gone on without him. The crucial action is the prior intimation to the superior that the event will take place.

The importance of the village as a social group is reflected in the request of the headman that people should drink by villages and also in some of the other speeches. As one woman said, 'This is the village of Tsong'oto; it came from here a long time ago. There are lies here old and young. But you cannot break this village. Just recently it came to this site. It just captured you like a chicken. Now you say that you are the people who built this village. You cry now.' The village is an entity persisting through time; it does not belong to any one generation, but includes successive generations within itself. At the same time it is only by the actions of its members, and in particular by their avoidance of quarrels, that the village manages to survive intact.

The tension between two branches of one family is emphasized throughout the speeches. The deputy in this instance was the headman's father's paternal half-brother's son, and was some fifteen years his junior in age. Many of the speeches dwelt on the inevitability of conflict between the two, on the fact that other people would try to play one off against the other and how these attempts must be defeated. The deputy and his brothers were isolated spatially on the reed mat from the generality of the village and from the headman himself.

The importance of the matrilineal links in this patrilineally biased society is indicated by the fact that a special invitation to attend the ceremony was issued to the deputy's mother's brother. I was told beforehand that the mother's brother would say 'You have killed my son' when he made his speech, since his sister's son would now be second in the village to the headman; people might therefore not like him and would try to kill him. Although he did not actually say this, at least we may conclude that his role is socially regarded in the light of the expected statement.



This striking metaphor 'You have killed my son', the headman's 'You killed me in 1926', and the remark made by another speaker, 'This our child you have killed for us. We thought he was big enough, but you have killed him', are indicative of the attitude of Ngoni towards positions of power. On the one hand the child must respect his elders; villagers must respect their headman; the people must respect their Chief. At the same time if a man is a good man, he ought to be rewarded with office; society is not static, and in the days of peace Mpezeni was continually raising up people of humble origin and giving them followers. And yet to be given such a post is to expose oneself to all the dangers that are associated with high office. It is the rich man who has many troubles, the poor man who lives in peace. Therefore to be rewarded by being selected for a post is to be killed; it is to call down on oneself the envy and jealousy of those who were not selected, and who will attempt to kill one, not only directly by poisons and other medicines, but also by troubles, which break a man's spirit and divide his people so that they flee from him and he is left isolated, his position and his office gone. Thus runs the argument.

In normal everyday life the hostility of the commonalty towards the holders of office does not often find overt expression, although headmen and chiefs are not averse from mentioning openly the hostility that they realize the people feel towards them. In this ceremony, however, there is ample opportunity for the expression of violent hostility on the part of the common people. As we have seen, the commonest idioms in which this is phrased refer to the failure to provide beer and to telling lies. 'I hear from other people that you are all liars. You must stop. . . . You come to follow the customs of people here. Now you tell lies here . . .' and 'You often brew and do not give beer to the people'. 'Beer brewed merely for sale is not a good thing.' 'You were a very bad mother. In future you will be very bad. Always if a woman sits on the mat she is a very bad woman in future. . . .' Such accusations, which in this case were, as far as I could ascertain, unfounded, would have led in the ordinary course of events to a quarrel and a court case. But in this ceremony we have a socially sanctioned occasion at which they can be made with impunity. The recipients of these insults sit passively on the mat, their eyes fixed on the ground. Even while they are being abused, they are being rewarded, since no one makes a speech without putting some contribution into the plate. There are no doubt elements of great psychological importance in this situation, but we are here concerned with the sociological significance of the picture. The people, all of them related in one way or another to the headman, by their attendance at the ceremony give their approval to the appointment of this man to a post in which he will be set over and against them and in which he must become, from one point of view, their enemy.

Ngoni women, in most public situations, do not make speeches and indeed often say nothing at all. At the same time they exercise a very great influence in public affairs. In this ceremony, where they do speak, the tension between the sexes receives explicit recognition. A man said in his speech, 'Always there is something wrong with the women. The men are all right. Women are back-biters; after a thing, they tell it all wrong. It is not because of people that we are here, it is because of women.' And another, 'The chief is always a woman, not a man.' The position of the deputy's wife is formally recognized by placing her on the mat with her husband and she is



harangued by the speakers as much as the deputy himself. The emphasis on hospitality in the role of an important person reacts on the part played by his wife as the brewer of beer and controller of the supplies of food. Without a co-operative wife no man can be hospitable. The respect paid to a person's senior female relatives is cited as a disciplinary factor in the headman's speech: 'We say *dade* and fear our mother's mother'—*dade* being a special term of respect used by a man in speaking of or to an elder sister.

Such ceremonies as these occur infrequently, although there are certain features, such as the formal instruction of a person whose status has recently changed, which are found in marriage and funeral ceremonies. From the tribal point of view the post of headman's deputy is not a very important one, nor is it recognized in any way by the Administration. Not every village headman, indeed, has a deputy. The presence of the large crowd cannot be explained merely in terms of beer, as on a Sunday there is, at that time of the year, always plenty of beer to be found. It was known beforehand that the beer had not matured properly on the appointed day so that it was doubtful whether it would be good to drink on the Sunday; most of it was in fact unpleasantly sour. The dance probably attracted many of the younger people but it was ignored by the older participants in the ceremony and their presence must be attributed to their interest in the ceremony as such. They came because of their relationship, genealogical and geographical, to the headman of Tsong'oto and his deputy, to ensure that correct instruction was given to the new deputy, and to demonstrate by their presence their support of, and their hostility towards, the office and its holder.

### *Résumé*

#### LE CHEF DE VILLAGE EN AFRIQUE CENTRALE BRITANNIQUE

CET article est le résultat de recherches organisées par l'Institut Rhodes-Livingstone au cours desquelles la structure sociale de diverses tribus de l'Afrique Centrale a été étudiée et comparée. L'introduction décrit l'organisation du village parmi plusieurs tribus, et la position du chef vis-à-vis du village et vis-à-vis de l'administration. L'auteur signale que le chef dirige le village, tout en le représentant auprès de l'administration, et qu'il est en train de devenir, en même temps, l'agent de l'administration vis-à-vis du village. Les obligations que lui imposent les liens de parenté se heurtent parfois à ses devoirs de chef. La seconde partie de l'article décrit la structure des villages parmi les Yao du Nyassaland, et les facteurs qui tendent à unir ou à diviser la communauté. La troisième partie décrit la cérémonie accompagnant l'installation d'un aide-chef dans un village des Ngones de Fort Jameson dans la Rhodésie du Nord. Les trois auteurs soulignent l'importance du chef dans la structure de la vie du village et dans l'administration, et insistent sur la nécessité de pousser plus loin l'étude de ce problème.



## ANALYSIS OF THE BAHIMA MARRIAGE CEREMONY

KALERVO OBERG

THE Banyankole, who live in western Uganda, East Africa, are made up of two ethnic groups, the Bairu and the Bahima. The Bairu, who number about a quarter of a million, are Bantu agriculturists. The Bahima, on the other hand, are Hamiticized negro cattle people of north African origin. Although numbering only about ten thousand, the Bahima were able, before British control, to dominate the Bairu and rule them as serfs.<sup>1</sup>

The Bahima marriage ceremony, both functionally and formally, is an integral part of their social organization, judicial conceptions, and magical beliefs. On close examination the marriage ceremony can be broken down into its legal, magical, and secular aspects; and furthermore, the formal elements can be reduced to more fundamental constituents of the culture.

Prohibitions and preferences governing the choice of mates arise out of considerations of caste, wealth, and kinship. The caste distinction prohibits a Muhima from marrying a Mwiru. A socially recognized marriage can take place only between a man and a woman who are both members of the ruling Bahima caste. Although kinship prohibitions prevent a Muhima from marrying his father's brother's and mother's sister's daughters, cross-cousin marriage is permitted. The principal duty of the wife is to bear children and a man, therefore, endeavours to obtain a wife from a family in which women are believed to be prolific.

Although social preference is not marked, individual preference plays a considerable part in the selection of a bride. Young men go in search of pretty girls and servants are supposed to inform their masters of the existence of beautiful women. Competition for beautiful women exists and has led to a well-recognized custom of making certain of one's future wife. If a Muhima is poor in cattle and cannot, therefore, make the necessary marriage payment, he can lay claim to a girl by smearing her with butter. This custom is known as *orusigyiro*. The successful carrying out of this act depends upon the mutual desire of the man and woman to marry, for the man must catch the young woman alone, undress her, and smear butter over her entire body. The woman then goes to her parents and explains what has happened. The intimacy between the young couple is considered almost as close as that brought about by pre-marital intercourse. It reveals the fact that the woman is anxious to marry the man, for she has contrived to bring about a secret meeting. On the whole, however, *orusigyiro* is not extensively practised. It is the nearest thing they have to our conception of courtship as an agreement between a man and a woman to marry. As *orusigyiro* takes place only in special circumstances it is safe to say that courtship is not a recognized prelude to marriage.

The usual custom is to send a younger brother or even a herdsman to ask for a wife. After hearing the request, the girl's father calls his brothers and sisters together

<sup>1</sup> For additional information on the Banyankole see Roscoe, J., *The Banyankole*, London, 1923; Oberg, K., 'Kinship Organization of the Banyankole', *Africa*, Apr. 1938; 'The Kingdom of

Ankole', *African Political Systems*, edited by M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Oxford University Press, 1940.



and they decide upon an answer. If the boy's father is rich a favourable answer is given immediately.

The *okuhuta* or formal request may often be made by the boy's father's brother. He takes beer, butter, and spears to the girl's father and lauds the wealth and prestige of the boy's father. Quite often the girl's father gives no answer, for there might be a number of men seeking his daughter and he is anxious to choose the wealthiest for his son-in-law. The *okuhuta* may thus be repeated several times before a definite answer is given. The girl's father's sisters carefully inquire into the character of the young man and his relatives, wanting particularly to know whether they are kind to their women. If the girl does not wish to take a certain man as her husband, she can, by making her wishes known to her father's sister, sometimes avoid the marriage.

Before a final decision is taken both the father of the girl and the father of the boy go to a diviner, for they wish to know if the marriage will be successful. The method of divination may be any one of a number of ways in which the Banyankole practise this art. An unfavourable augury may cut short the marriage proceedings.

Next comes the picking out of the marriage cattle or *enzhugano*. The girl's father comes to the boy's kraal and remains there all night. During the night beer is drunk and the number of cows to be given is determined. If the number is too small, the girl's father shows his displeasure by throwing too much wood on the fire, thus making the hut uncomfortably hot, and refusing to drink the beer which is offered to him, merely taking a sip now and then. In order to please him, the boy's father increases the number of cattle. By morning agreement is reached and after the cows have been milked and led into the *ishazi*, a place where cows are cleaned and given medical attention, the girl's father goes out to make his selection. Before the girl's father begins to make his selection, however, the boy's father drives aside certain cows which are not to be touched. Among these will be the *ente y'enimi* or cow of the leading bull, *ente y'obuta* or cow of the bow, *enshugyi* or cows of the mother's *emandwa*, and *enzimu* or cows set aside for the ancestral spirits. The rest of the cows, including the favourite cows of the kraalspeople, are now available for the selection of the *enzhugano*. The girl's father goes among them with his herdsmen and picks out the required number, being careful to select the best young cattle. The kraalspeople stand near and watch the proceeding for they are anxious that their favourite cows should not be taken. The selected cattle are then driven to one side and the girl's father asks their names and the names of their mothers. The appearance and the names of the cattle are remembered, for they are left in the boy's father's kraal until the day of the wedding ceremony. If the marriage is to take place soon the cattle are known as *enzhugano*, but if either the boy or the girl is still under age and a number of years must elapse before the marriage takes place they are called *enkwatarugo*, cows which hold up the fence.

The boy is now known as the *ebishwera*, groom, and the girl as the *omugore*, bride. For about two months before the wedding day the bride is fattened. A special hut is built for her where she is taken care of by one of her father's sisters. She is made to drink large quantities of milk, by force if necessary, and is not permitted to walk about. The fatter she becomes the more beautiful she is considered and on the wedding-day people will comment upon her beauty. They will say she is beautiful because her parents have many cows. Extreme beauty is made evident by the cracks in the skin



caused by fatness and by the difficulty with which the girl walks. If the girl's father has not enough cows to fatten his daughter the groom's father will send over some of the *enzhugano* cows. This is considered shameful by the girl's relatives but even more shameful is a thin bride.

During the two months when the bride is being fattened the groom is not supposed to have sexual intercourse, for it is believed that intercourse at this time will make him impotent and prevent his wife from bearing many children. He is watched by his father, who endeavours to guard him from evil influences. If the groom should be confronted by an evil omen, immediate steps are taken to have the evil influence removed. In short, both the bride and groom are at a critical period of life and must be guarded against evil, magical forces, *ihano*.

Four days before the day fixed for the wedding ceremony, the bride and groom have to be shaved, *okutega*. This shaving is an important and carefully performed act. Special razors are made which are not used by anyone else until after the last shaving when the girl comes out of seclusion. A special enclosure, *engombi*, is built for this purpose near the kraal. Both the bride and groom, although shaved in their respective kraals, must be shaved on the same day and before sunrise. The groom is shaved by his father's brothers and the bride by her father's sisters. The hair is shaved off the head and pubis and is kept by the bride's and groom's respective parents until the wedding ceremony has been completed, after which it is burnt.

The bride's father sends four men known as *ebishushu* to call the groom and his relatives to the wedding ceremony, *obugenyi*. The groom, his father, father's brothers, and his own brothers and friends then go to the bride's home. All these people are collectively known as the *abakwe*. One among them is of special importance. He is a boy about twelve years of age whose father and mother are alive. He is known as the *omwana y'ekyihara*, the child of shaving. This boy appears in a number of Bahima ceremonies with the customary *omuko* leaves. The ritual significance of the *omwana y'ekyihara* is, therefore, wider than the wedding ceremony and seems to imply good fortune, for a child with both parents alive is considered lucky.

On the way to the girl's kraal the *abakwe* watch for evil omens. Scouts are out in front to warn the group of bad *ihanos*. So long as the groom does not hear or see these omens he is considered safe. The *abakwe* are especially careful to see that the groom is not bitten by red ants. When these ants are seen on the path he is lifted over them. The journey is so arranged that the *abakwe* arrive at the girl's kraal at nightfall when the cows are in the enclosure.

Upon the arrival of the *abakwe*, two men are sent into the kraal to 'ask for *engaro* fingers', which consists in the kissing of the bride's father's fingers. While one of the men is performing *engaro* the other is reciting, *okwevuga*. They drink some beer, making certain to drink all that is offered. Now that *engaro* has been given they go back to the *ishazi* to bring in the rest of the *abakwe*. As the *abakwe* enter the hut the soles of their feet are touched by the sisters of the bride and the sisters of the bride's father. This is a sign of intimacy and expresses the fact that the two extended families are now on very close terms. Before the *abakwe* enter in force, the bride's father and mother tie white rabbits' tails upon their foreheads and take their seats on the side of the wall opposite the doorway. They must maintain silence until *okwevuga* is performed a second time. The bride's relatives and friends sit at one side of the hut



and the groom's relatives and friends at the other, kraalsmen and others crowd outside the doorway. The bride is heard wailing behind a partition in the hut. The groom sits with the *abakwe* but he must remain silent, drinking the beer which is offered to him. After the *abakwe* have seated themselves and have been given beer, the bride's relatives begin to recite a special marriage recitation known as the *emanzhya*:

Welcome, Abashambo [or name of clan of boy's relatives],  
 We find you here, Abashambo,  
 You come as the new moon.  
 The new king is put on the throne during the new moon.  
 During the new moon, the cow goes with the bull.  
 During the new moon initiation [into the *emandwa* cult] takes place.  
 During the new moon all good things come.

To this recitation the *abakwe* reply:

And you, Abagashe [or name of bride's clan],  
 We find you as a stick,  
 A stick carved into pipe stems.  
 Pipe stems that are used for drinking beer.  
 Sticks carved into walking-sticks.  
 For holding up huts and making gateways.  
 Sticks carved into drums.  
 Sticks carved into milk pots.  
 Milk pots into which the cows are milked.

After the *emanzhya* or praise song is finished, the bride's father and mother remove the rabbits' tails from their foreheads and are now permitted to speak. Some of the *abakwe* then go out into the *ishazi* to bring the *enzhugano* cattle into the kraal where the bride's father is assured that they are the right ones and that they answer to their names. The bride's father then fastens a rabbit's tail on a gourd churn.

The final transfer of the *enzhugano* then takes place. The groom's father takes a branch of the *omuko* tree and touches the back of each cow with it. The branch is then handed to the *omwana y'ekyihara* who hands it to the bride's father. The bride's father fastens it above the doorway of the hut in which the ceremony is taking place. This act is an exact repetition of the transfer of raided cattle. When a son or a herdsman has been successful in a cattle raid, he drives the cattle home with a branch of the *omuko* tree and when he gives a number of these cattle to his father or to a chief he hands the *omuko* branch over as a token of ownership. In marriage, the Bahima state, the bride raids the groom's father's herd and the cattle must be handed over as if they had been raided. 'The child of shaving' acts as an intermediary to bring good luck.

After the cattle transfer has taken place more food and beer are brought to the guests and singing and dancing go on until three o'clock in the morning. Everyone participates in the festivities except the groom, his father, the bride, and her parents, who sit aside and watch the performance. The *abakwe* dance, sing, and recite for the bride's family and the bride's family do the same for the *abakwe*. Both sides recite the exploits of their respective families and clans in raiding, and extoll the quality and size of their herds.



At three o'clock in the morning the *okukwata ahamukono* takes place. One of the bride's father's brothers takes the groom to the bride and in the presence of everyone they hold hands for a little while. The guests comment on the appearance of the bride and say that she will have many children. 'The child of shaving' stands near by. The Bahima say that once the bride and groom have held hands they cannot be separated. This is the first public contact of the bride and groom. The groom then goes back among the *abakwe* and the entertainment goes on.

At cockcrow the bride and groom perform the *okwegyiro ahansi*, putting down for a moment. They are taken to a screened-off place in the hut called *entarure*. Here in the presence of relatives and friends the bride and groom lie down for a few moments near one another but they are permitted no intimacies. The *omwana y'ekyihara* stands near by. This act signifies that they will sleep together in the future.

At dawn the bride's brother takes his sister out of the kraal. When they reach the kraal gate the brother takes one of the smaller sticks from it and asks his sister to grasp one end, he then breaks the stick in two. This breaking of the gate-stick is known as *okuhenda akati k'eirembo*. It corresponds to the burning of the gate-sticks during a burial ceremony and the Bahima explain it as 'one of us is leaving for ever'. Breaking sticks or branches to denote separation is a common magical practice among the Banyankole. When a person meets a bad luck sign he will pick up a stick and break it in two, believing that by this act he has separated himself from the evil influence. After a quarrel a man may break a stick in the presence of the enemy, thereby showing that their former relationship is broken. When the girl breaks the gatestick it seems to signify that her relationship with her kraal and relatives is broken. Sometimes the bride's brother does not take part in the stick-breaking; the bride, when leaving the kraal, breaks off a stick from the gateway and hides the pieces in her clothing.

The stick-breaking is only an interlude performed on the way to a special little hut built outside the kraal where the *okushwerana amati*, to marry one another with milk, takes place. When they get inside the hut the bride and groom sit opposite one another. Friends and relatives, including the *omwana y'ekyihara*, stand near by. The bride and groom fill their mouths with milk and blow it over one another. They are united with milk or, as the Bahima say, 'there is now milk between them'.

The burning of the hut where the milk ceremony takes place is also an important item in the *obugyeni*, wedding ceremony. This ceremonial burning is known as *okumaza amazhuta*, to finish the butter. We have mentioned the fact that undisputed claim to a girl can be established by smearing her with butter. From this practice, the Bahima claim, has arisen the custom of calling every betrothed girl 'of butter'. Every bride is, therefore, in the butter stage of marriage until the little hut where the milk was blown has been burnt down. The burning down of the hut melts the butter and establishes wifehood.

When the bride comes back into the kraal her brother takes her near the cattle, puts a new milk pot into her hand, and says, 'Milk for us, milk for your father and uncles, for your brothers and your sisters.' The bride touches one of the cows with the milk pot and returns it to her brother. This act, the Bahima say, means that the bride must help her relatives in dire need. When their cattle die or are taken in raids she must send milk to them. The demand that the bride should milk is, of course,



symbolic, for no woman among the Bahima is permitted to milk. An immature girl may touch the udder of a cow but a woman may not even do this.

This symbolic milking is the last act of the marriage ceremony in which the bride or groom participates. All these acts must be performed between cockcrow and sunrise, for that is, ritually, the purest part of the day. In every act in which the groom takes part, the *omwana y'ekyihara* must be present, as he belongs to the groom's extended family and is a harbinger of good fortune.

When the sun has risen, the cows are taken out to the *ishazi* and the kraal is cleaned. A new bark cloth is spread on the ground and all the gifts, *enshagarirano*, which the bride's people have given her, are spread out on it. They consist of bark cloths, milk pots, a gourd churn, a smoking pot for cleaning milk pots, *engyemeko ya rukome* (sanitary pot for cleaning the vagina) with the requisite sweet-smelling herbs, and a number of wire decorations. The bride's father then takes the groom and his father out to the *ishazi* and picks out a number of cows for the groom. The groom is entitled to refuse an old cow or one he does not like. The number of cows given depends entirely upon the generosity of the bride's father. Often they amount to half of the *enzhugano* cattle. These cattle are known as *enshagarirano* and are expressly given to the groom as a token of his new relationship with the bride's people. The Bahima speak of the bride's *enshagarirano* and the groom's *enshagarirano* as being distinct from the *enzhugano* or marriage payment.

The father and mother of the bride and the groom's father retire to a hut to drink the beer of butter-smearing, *amarua g'orurisigiro*; like the burning of the hut, this act signifies the settlement of the marriage contract. While the parents are drinking beer the bride is prepared for her journey to the groom's kraal. Her kinswomen put the wire anklets on the bride; make a few cuts upon her chest and rub love medicine into them to make the husband love her; give her small ornaments and charms, *engisha*, which are to protect her health and guard her against the jealousy of co-wives; and finally they strip her and place her in the litter which is to take her to her new home. She is carefully covered with a bark cloth and most of her *enshagarirano* are placed in the *engozi* or litter with her. The girl's sisters and friends are not supposed to weep while they prepare the bride for her journey for that is taken as a sign of future sorrow. Usually, however, the bride's kinswomen hold back their tears with difficulty. Whatever the bride feels she certainly appears sad and frightened. Her eyes are downcast, she seems not to know what is going on and is led about by her friends. The groom, on the other hand, walks about and appears quite normal.

Every effort, as we have seen, is made to guard the young couple from evil influences during the wedding ceremony. Good social relationships, especially on the part of the groom, are also necessary for a successful marriage. Adultery is strictly barred and if he has had disputes with anyone in his past life he must have settled them before his marriage. An interesting test of the groom's rectitude may take place at this juncture, namely, before the *abakwe* return to the groom's kraal with the bride. As the litter passes out of the gateway any man who, in the past, has been ill-treated in any way by the groom may now approach the litter and, putting his hand on it, say, 'You cannot marry this girl, I forbid it.' He must then relate his grievances and bring forth his witnesses in the presence of everyone. The bride's father will then insist that the wrong be compensated on the spot. The groom will



generally settle the matter by giving the injured party a cow. If a settlement is not made, the marriage is annulled and the boy may never again get a wife, for the Bahima believe that there is an evil influence about such a person and that he will bring bad luck to the wife's family. This custom is known as *okwaka*, to deprive.

Even greater care must be taken on the return journey, than during the coming, of the *abakwe*. Red ants, especially, are avoided. Purification may be necessary on the way. The bride's litter is hung with charms. The *abakwe* must arrive at the groom's home after dark and must find the cattle in the kraal. As the *abakwe* approach the kraal they blow horns and sing:

We have come with the Abagahe one,  
The giver of birth, the woman of the butter smearing,  
They are friends of ours, the Abagahe,  
We are giving birth through them.  
We are like the leading bull,  
We go to the Abagahe.

When the bride is taken out of the litter she is given a new bark cloth and covers her head and face. From now on she must not uncover her face before men other than the members of her husband's extended family, that is, men with whom she is permitted to have sexual intercourse. She is met by the groom's mother and sisters. The mother offers the bride a gourd churn which she holds for a moment before returning it. One of the groom's sisters then gives the bride a handful of millet and a handful of *enshogye* seeds. The bride is led four times around the cattle and the people in the kraal, dropping the seeds as she goes. The purpose of this act is to make the cattle and the women of the kraal as prolific as the millet and the *enshogye* plant.

The bride is now taken into the groom's father's hut and one of the groom's brothers places her first upon the groom's father's lap and then upon the groom's mother's lap. This is known as *okwakyira*, to receive the child. The groom's parents uncover the bride and comment upon her fatness and health and give her a name which will be used from now on. The name is generally one in common use in the groom's clan. The bride will, in the future, receive other names depending upon her appearance or actions, but the *okwakyira* name will be used upon special occasions. The bride is now 'born' into the groom's extended family.

The groom's father and mother then take their son and his bride behind a partition in the hut and wash them with new moon water. 'The child of shaving' attends the ceremony. This washing is the widely used ritual of purification known as *okuhasirira* and is believed to rid them of any evil which might have become attached to them during the wedding journey.

After the ritual washing the bride is secluded in a special part of the groom's father's hut. The *okwarama* or seclusion may last for a month or two. On the first night of the seclusion, the *omwana y'ekyihara*, 'child of shaving', and the groom approach the bride and the 'child of shaving' urinates upon a handful of *omuko* leaves and rubs the bride's thighs with it. The urine is said to represent semen and the *omuko* leaves will bring success. The groom then urinates in his palm and rubs the bride's thighs. He does not have sexual intercourse with her but merely inserts his thumb in the vagina. On the following night the groom has sexual intercourse



with the bride in the presence of the 'child of shaving' and his kinswomen. The bride is supposed to resist violently and the kinswomen are there to help the groom. During this night the 'child of shaving' is allowed to fondle the bride but is not permitted to have sexual intercourse with her.

When the bride comes out of seclusion she is considered a member of the groom's extended family and a mature woman. The groom's kinswomen present her with *omushagarizi* leaves which married Bahima women use for keeping the vagina clean. The *okurabuka* or showing of cattle then takes place. One morning the kraal is cleaned and new grass is spread on the ground. The groom's relatives and friends are all invited to the kraal. The bride sits before the door of her new hut peeping through a fold in her veil. The groom's father goes out to the *ishazi* and brings in a cow, which he leads before the bride. 'Here is your cow. I am your *ishazara* (father-in-law). You must not smoke or chew tobacco. You must not be dirty. You must not be bad-tempered. You must give me tobacco when I ask for it. You must keep my milk pots clean. You must clean your body. You must keep your vagina clean. You must not evacuate on foot paths. You must keep your bed clean. You must let your brothers-in-law sleep with you.'

The groom's mother then approaches the bride with a cow and says, 'Here is your cow. I am your *nyinyazara* (mother-in-law). You must obey me and do everything I wish. Do not quarrel with your co-wives or sisters-in-law. Do not make your husband hate your co-wives. Be kind to the children in the kraal. You must keep my hut clean and wash my milk pots when I am sick.'

The brothers-in-law then, in turn, come before the bride, each relating what he dislikes about a sister-in-law and also what he demands of her. The demands are usually much the same as those already stated by the father-in-law except that they state their right to have sexual intercourse with her.

During *okwarama* or seclusion adultery is strictly forbidden. It is believed that the committing of adultery by either the groom or the bride will kill the other partner. It is also said to kill *ekyihara* or the period of shaving, that is, the critical period from the time when the bride and groom are first shaved four days before the marriage to the final shaving in the girl's kraal which is now to take place and which will liberate the newly married pair from the abnormal period of the marriage ceremony. The bride and groom go back to the bride's father's kraal for this rite. It is known as *okubasya ekyihara*, bringing back the hairless bride. The bride's kinswomen shave her head into the usual spiral pattern common to Bahima married women. Her finger-nails are cut into the customary pointed form and her ears are pierced for ear decorations. The bride shows great joy upon being freed from the dangers of *ekyihara*. The bride and the groom are fêted for one month and upon their return to the groom's kraal the bride's father presents the bride with a cow which is called the *ente y'ekyihara*, cow of shaving. This cow belongs to the bride and not to the groom. It is considered by the Bahima as a 'cow which reminds the bride of her parents and causes her to visit her own people'. When the young husband and wife return to the boy's father's kraal the bride is given a new name and takes up her duties as a member of the boy's kraal.

Second marriages do not require an elaborate ceremony. Once the marriage ritual has been performed over a man or a woman, he or she is considered to be



initiated into marriage. The performance of the magical practices is optional. While the milk-blowing and the burning of the hut in which this act is performed may be omitted, the Bahima generally adhere to the custom of carrying the bride to her husband's home in an *engozi* and placing her in seclusion for a few days. They believe that the transfer of the bride to her husband's group should be made, but that if she has already gone through one *ekyihara*, or crisis period, she is not subject to the dangers believed to be inherent in the transfer to a new relationship.

The Bahima have another form of marriage known as *okushwera kyokutahirira*, the marriage of coming in. It sometimes happens that a Muhima cattle owner has no sons and no brother's sons but only a daughter. At his death his cattle may be distributed among his nearest kinsmen in his *ekyika*, sub-clan. If, for some reason, a man does not wish to have his herd scattered he may ask some poor Muhima, whom he likes, to come and work for him. If the herdsman proves satisfactory the cattle owner will give him his daughter as a wife and at his death the cattle owner's herd will pass to this herdsman and eventually to the original owner's grandsons.

During the lifetime of the wife's father, the husband is not considered fully married. He cannot take his wife away from the kraal nor has he any rights over the cattle. Even after children are born the wife's father has legal rights over them, although they belong to the husband's extended family. The wife's father has the right to drive the husband away, the man having no legal claim upon the wife's father. It is only after the wife's father has died that the husband comes into his full rights over his wife and cattle. Even then he is not recognized by his wife's extended family as a member; that is, this type of marriage does not constitute a form of adoption. In reality the cattle pass out of the extended family of the original owner.

*Analysis of the Marriage Ceremony.* Although the marriage contract, which is negotiated during the ceremony, establishes a husband-wife relationship and supports all the co-operative activities which this relationship implies as the basis of a family structure, we should be mistaken in thinking of this contract as a transaction between the man and the woman concerned. Marriage as a relationship and marriage as a contract must not be confused. As we have seen, marriage as a legal transaction is an agreement reached between a prospective husband or his father and the father of the girl. There is no resort to a higher judicial authority such as chief, king, or religious body; it is, in its very essence, an agreement between two men as members of two separate groups.

Although every woman can, to a certain degree, affect the selection of her future husband by consent, refusal, or direct choice, she cannot act on her own behalf in making this bond legally binding. Women may, and sometimes do, run away with a man, bear him children, and act in every way as a wife, but this union is not, according to Bahima custom, recognized as a true marriage. Such a woman loses the protection of her extended family and is sometimes cursed and exiled from her group.

The prospective husband or his father is, also, not entirely a free agent in an affair of marriage. The extended family of which he is a member is a unit of close economic and political co-operation, interested in its numerical strength and continuity. Being an exogamic group, the extended family cannot reproduce within itself but must seek women from without, the children of such marriages being incorporated into



the husband's group through patrilineal descent. From the legal standpoint, therefore, it is the men of the extended family who produce the offspring, and thus maintain its continuity.

The internal structure and exogamic nature of the extended family make marriage an extra-group affair. Before a man can enter marriage he has to discuss the suitability of the bride with his father, brothers, father's brothers, sisters, and father's sisters. There is usually a great deal of argument and a diviner is consulted, as we have seen. A substantial degree of agreement must be reached before full support to a proposed marriage is given. While a cattle owner is usually able to make the marriage payment for himself and his sons, he must also gain the consent of his kinsmen. We have already observed the part which a man's extended family performs in the ritual side of the marriage ceremony. Moreover, it is the obligation of every father to acquire at least one child-bearing wife for each of his sons and every man is expected to acquire extra women in order to increase the number of his offspring. The interest and collaboration of the extended family in the marriage of its male members does not, however, imply anything in the nature of marriage as a group relationship. Every wife is the spouse of one man only. While it is true that a man's father, his uncles, and his brothers have sexual access to her this does not alter the fact that the husband has prior rights over her and a right to any children born to her.

But a woman is also a member of an extended family, under the protection and authority of her father. Furthermore, every woman as a child-bearer performs a service for a member of another group. This makes marriage an inter-group matter, a transaction which can be effected only through an agreement between two extended families and by the exchange of property and a woman. Without this agreement and this transfer no true marriage can be made. The transfer of the *enzhugano*, marriage payment, is one side of the contract, and is as essential to it as is the other side, namely, the transfer of a woman to another group as a child-bearer.

In their comments on marriage payments the Bahima deny that they are payments for children. They point out that children are always members of their father's group. Children born to unmarried couples belong to the father and have full rights as members of his extended family. If these unions exist between parents who are both Bahima, no stigma is attached to the children. Children born to a Muhima through a Mwiru 'servant girl' are known as *abambari* and have a lower social status than children of pure Bahima blood. This lower status, however, is not due to the fact that their parents are unmarried but because they themselves are half-castes. I have known a number of young *abambari* who, after the death of their fathers, have inherited cattle and other property and who have established kraals. In the old days, if a young girl became pregnant while under the care of her parents she was killed by drowning before the child was born. Missionaries have told me of cases where this actually happened and I know of one Muhima girl who came to the mission station after she had been badly beaten by her father and was confined at the mission hospital. She was completely disowned by her family. The crime here was pre-marital sexual intercourse. The concept of illegitimacy is quite foreign to the Bahima. They do not think of the marriage and the *enzhugano* as factors making for the legitimacy of children. They also deny that the marriage payment is compensation for the loss of a female worker. The Bahima, in fact, make an effort to have



their daughters married off because they are economically a loss rather than an asset. Nor is the *enzhugano* a payment for a woman, for after marriage she still remains a member of her father's group. About the marriage payment the Bahima make only one statement: 'We cannot get a woman to bear children for us without paying her father.' In essence this simply means that as a woman belongs to another group her services as a child-bearer can be obtained only by compensating that group. A marriage contract is an inter-group transaction of the same nature as a settlement resulting from theft, adultery, and murder.

According to Bahima notions, the *enzhugano* does not give validity to the marriage contract for it is itself a part of the contract. What makes the contract legally valid is the fact that it is publicly witnessed. Throughout the performance 'friends' have to preside, who, in case of dispute, are called upon to supply evidence. Once the marriage payment is handed over to a bride's father and the bride is taken to the groom's home the marriage contract as an agreement is complete. We cannot speak of the *enzhugano* as stabilizing or legitimizing marriage in the same sense as the sanction provided by a court or a religious body. The *enzhugano* is not a third factor in a two-person agreement but an element in an agreement between two men. Once the contract is closed, marriage as a valid relationship exists and what gives it stability and permanence is the support created by the two extended families concerned.

Marriage, then, as a contract, is made by a man and the father of a woman. The woman, or more specifically, the child-bearing capacity of a woman, is the object of the contract and this is very clearly expressed in the terms. The request for the bride is a request by the man 'to give birth through you', that is, through the bride's father's group. The agreement stipulates that if a wife is found to be barren she can be returned to her father, in which case the marriage payment must be handed back to the husband. If a wife dies shortly after marriage and without giving birth the husband can demand her sister in fulfilment of the contract. This, again, shows the contract to be an agreement between two men in which the woman and the *enzhugano* form inseparable parts. If the wife is lazy and careless and lets her children die from lack of attention the contract can be terminated. Likewise, if she repeatedly commits adultery and is quarrelsome she can be returned to her father.

A father can also terminate the contract binding his daughter to a man. If his daughter repeatedly complains of ill treatment, either by her husband or his male relatives, she returns to her home and a meeting is held in which the members of the two extended families concerned participate. If the wife's claim is just she will not be forced to go back to her husband. If she has borne no children the *enzhugano* is returned. If she has borne one or two children only part of the *enzhugano* will be returned. But if she is old and has borne many children the *enzhugano* will not be returned and, in fact, if such a woman has been beaten her father or brothers will demand compensation for her ill treatment. A divorced woman is permitted to keep very young children until such time as they are able to look after themselves, when they must return to their father's home.

The marriage contract as an inter-group agreement is further revealed by what happens after the death of one of the contracting parties. We have already shown that the death of the wife does not terminate the contract. She may be replaced by a sister. A barren wife may also be replaced by a sister. The death of the husband



seldom terminates the contract. The widow is usually given to the husband's brother or son, if she is not his mother. In some cases the husband's father keeps her himself. Furthermore, it often happens that the original contractors of the marriage transaction are not the same persons who are called upon to dissolve it. A widow may seek divorce and, if her father is dead, one of her father's brothers or one of her own brothers will bring the matter before the two extended families in order to terminate the contract.

The Bahima marriage ceremony as a legal transaction has at least three distinct parts. First, there is the *okuhuta*, betrothal, during which a girl is formally promised to a man. This takes place at the bride's home where the successful suitor or his father is fêted and, in turn, gives presents to the future bride's father. Then comes the *okushugyisa* or settlement and the selection of the *enzhugano* in the prospective groom's home and, finally, the *obugyenyi*, wedding ceremony, at the bride's home to which the *enzhugano* is taken and from which the bride is taken to her husband's kraal. So much for marriage as a contract. We shall next examine the marriage ceremony as a magical rite.

To a man or woman entry into marriage signifies a change in social status. To a woman this change implies a profound physiological and social readjustment. She is no longer an *omwishiki*, unmarried girl, under the care of her father and mother but is now an *omukazi*, woman, with new relationships, with different obligations and risks. While in the case of the man the change is less sharp, he, too, enters upon a new career as a husband and father.

This change of status is signalized by a magical rite, a ritual unification of the bride and groom. Among the Bahima, lying down behind a screen and blowing milk over one another are rites uniting the bride and groom. The burning of the hut 'melts the butter' of betrothal. Before leaving her home the bride puts on the wire anklets of a married woman. At the groom's home ritual sexual intercourse takes place and the bride is presented with the scented leaves used by married women for sanitary purposes.

At first blush performance of these ritual acts seems to indicate no more than the union of the bride and groom. But, as we have seen, it is not necessary to perform these rites twice over the same person. According to Bahima notions, the marriage ritual seems to be an initiation into marriage as a social status rather than the union of particular individuals. If one has been married once, one is no longer an unmarried person but an *omushwera*, 'married one'.

The reality of marriage, to the Bahima, is the relationship and the social purposes which this relationship seeks to fulfill. In order to make the activities inherent in the marriage relationship successful, they surround the establishment of this relationship with magical practices. The wedding period is a transition period, a time of crisis. It opens with the shaving of the bride and groom and closes with the presentation of the *ente y'ekyihara*, 'cow of shaving'. All evil omens are to be avoided and, if met with, counter magic must be practised. Adultery is strictly forbidden for it will 'kill the *ekyihara*'. Among the Bahima success is invoked by the wearing of the white rabbits' tails, and the presence of the 'child of shaving' at such important junctures as the handing over of the cattle, the milk-blowing, and during symbolic sexual intercourse between the bride and groom. Any 'evil' that may have con-



taminated the couple is washed away with 'new moon water'. Fertility is believed to be ensured by the scattering of millet and *enshogy* seeds around the cattle. The importance of friendly social relationships, for enmity is considered magically evil, is shown by the right of injured persons to prevent a marriage. Until a groom has made compensation for his misdeeds he cannot carry the bride home.

To the bride marriage means more than union with a man. It means also a break with her own family and introduction into her husband's group. This transfer, too, is expressed in the marriage ritual. The bride is 'as if dead' to her relatives. Among the Bahima, the break is symbolized by the breaking off of a chip or stick from the gatepost and by the symbolic milking by the bride. Bahima brides are carried to their husbands' homes in a covered *engozi*, where they are placed upon the laps of their respective fathers- and mothers-in-law. This part of the marriage ceremony is similar to the *emandwa* initiation which the Banyankole call 'birth' into the *emandwa* society. When we know that, after sitting upon the laps of the fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law, the brides are put into seclusion and are tended like children, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that brides are ritually born into their husbands' groups. This initiation is further characterized by the giving of a new name to a wife. Finally, the young wife is shown her husband's cattle and is ceremonially given advice as to her conduct towards her in-laws. This ritual rebirth does not, as we know, sever all connexions between the wife and her family. She becomes a partial member of her husband's family. After the seclusion she returns to her own home where she is finally released from *ekyihara*, 'time of shaving'.

Marriage also links up the families of the husband and the wife by creating a number of affinal relatives. Betrothal is preceded by an investigation into the standing of the respective families and the settlement of quarrels. A diviner gives his verdict upon the proposed union. The ceremony is initiated by speeches and songs of praise. Gifts are exchanged between the father of the bride and the father of the groom which are eventually distributed among the relatives and help in making bonds of trust and friendship. The parents of the bride and the father of the groom drink beer out of the same pot at crucial moments. This new relationship is expressed by the kinswomen of the bride touching the soles of the feet of the groom's male relatives. Thus the marriage ceremony, as a magical rite, is instrumental in establishing all those relationships which are necessary to the effective operation of the marriage.

While the religious element enters into the marriage ceremony in the form of the ancestor cult, there is nothing about its practices peculiar to marriage. Marriage is just another occasion upon which offerings and requests to the ancestral spirits are made. The bride, especially, beseeches the ancestral spirits to make her fertile, to make birth easy, and to increase her property. During the marriage ceremony special offerings may be made to ancestral spirits by other relatives. In every case, however, some of the food, either millet, beer, or meat, which is eaten during the marriage feast, is placed in the *endaro*, spirit huts, of the ancestors. The Bahima believe that if everything is going successfully no resort to the ancestors is necessary, but if difficulties over the marriage payment arise or if barrenness is expected, then the ancestral spirits are called upon to help. In some cases even *emandwa* spirits may be offered to and besought.

In addition to being a magical and religious rite, a marriage ceremony is one of the



principal secular events in a given locality. Long before it takes place the families concerned accumulate millet, beer, and meat for the occasion. Huts are enlarged and sometimes new ones are built in order to accommodate the guests. Special bullocks are picked out for slaughter. Although the participants consist chiefly of the members of the two extended families, friends are invited and usually a large number of local residents come to take part in the dancing and to share in the 'beer drink'.

In conclusion we might summarize the principal elements of the marriage ceremony and attempt to show from what cultural sources the peculiarities of these elements arise. Thus, while Bahima songs and Bahima dances are performed, these songs and dances are not peculiar to the marriage ceremony as such, but belong to the body of songs and dances common to the people. The same is true of the religious element in the marriage ceremony. Even when the bride requests the spirits of her ancestors for fertility and easy birth, the offering is made in the customary way. That is, the artistic and religious parts of the marriage ceremony are parts of the artistic and religious ideas, values, and practices of Banyankole culture.

Superficially, the magical element in the marriage ceremony appears to be a distinct rite, yet the basic magical notions and purposive acts of this ceremony have a wider application. The marriage ceremony expresses a crisis in the lives of the man and the woman concerned and the Bahima treat marriage in its broad outlines as they do birth, burial, and initiation. Shaving in each ceremony denotes a change of status. In each there is an interim period susceptible to malicious forces. In every case magic is used to establish new relationships, to guard individuals from harm, and to bring good fortune. Differences, of course, exist owing to the different purposes aimed at. In a birth ceremony the aim is to induce the child to grow into a strong, healthy adult; in the marriage ceremony, to induce fertility and to establish helpful relationships. While these differences are reflected in the magic practised, the underlying magical notions are the same and reveal the fact that the marriage ceremony, as a magical rite, is a particular application of general magical beliefs.

We come now to the marriage ceremony as a legal transaction and, at once, we are led to considerations of social organization. The express purpose of the ceremony as a legal act, from the initial presentation of betrothal gifts to the final presentation of the 'cow of shaving', is the uniting of a man and a woman in marriage. Yet the exact nature and sequence of these acts are understandable only in terms of social structure. No state or church concerned itself, in the past, with the marriage tie, yet it was not a matter in which a man and a woman acted alone. Not until we recognize the unity and power of the extended family, its laws of exogamy and descent, its political status and judicial authority, can we understand why the marriage contract is a transaction between two men as members of two separate kinship groups.



## LA PARENTÉ DES YORUBA AUX PEUPLADES DE DAHOMEY ET TOGO

JACQUES BERTHO

LES traditions unanimes des principaux groupements, qui peuplent actuellement le bas-Dahomey et le bas-Togo: Adja, Allada-nu, Ouatchi, Ewé, etc., indiquent clairement que leurs ancêtres sont venus de l'Est, et elles permettent de localiser quatre étapes successives dans leur marche vers l'Ouest:

1. Le pays Yoruba, à l'ouest du fleuve Niger, en Nigéria Anglaise.
2. La région de Kétou, au Dahomey (région située à 110 km de la mer et à 25 km à l'est du fleuve Ouémé).
3. La ville fortifiée de Tadô, au Togo (localité située à environ 100 km de la mer et à 12 km à l'est du fleuve Mono).
4. La ville fortifiée de Nuatja, au Togo (localité située à environ 90 km de la mer, sur le chemin de fer allant de Lomé à Atakpamé).

Les traditions des populations du bas-Togo ont été abondamment consignées par le Pasteur Spieth, dans son livre sur les Ewé: *Die Ewé Stämme*.<sup>1</sup>

Dès le début de son travail, Spieth prend soin de nous faire remarquer, qu'au sens premier, le mot 'Ewé' est un terme géographique caractérisant le relief du sol et signifiant 'la plaine'. C'est par extension que ce mot a été utilisé pour désigner globalement tous les habitants de la plaine du Togo. (La plaine du Togo s'étend d'Est en Ouest, entre la zone lagunaire du bord de la mer et la région montagneuse de l'intérieur. Il est probable que le radical 'Wé' se retrouve dans le mot 'Wé-da' qui désigne les habitants de la région de Ouidah, au Dahomey; ainsi que dans le mot 'Wé-mé' qui désigne la région comprise entre la rivière So qui coule du Nord au Sud, en face de Cotonou, et la rivière Yewa, qui se jette dans la lagune en face de Badagry.)

Comme nous le verrons, la plupart des populations de la plaine du Togo sont apparentées entre elles; cependant pour rendre compte de leur parenté, il ne leur suffira pas d'invoquer leur nom de 'Ewé' qui n'a rien d'une étiquette ethnique et qui peut être l'occasion de graves confusions; mais il leur faudra, ou bien prouver leur communauté d'origine à partir d'un centre commun de dispersion tel que Nuatja, Tadô, etc., et aussi à partir d'un même ancêtre commun, ou bien démontrer la communauté de leurs coutumes et traditions familiales.

Le pasteur Spieth (après une large enquête auprès des anciens de la région de Ho, au Togo britannique) nous dit que les Dogbonyigbo (ou Dogbo), les Bê, les Anlo (ou Awuna, ou Ahunan), ainsi que les Ho, les Akoviéwé, les Kpanoé, les Sokodé, les Abutia, les Kléwé, les Adaklu, les Kpando, les Kpalimé, sont tous originaires de Nuatja. A cause de leur provenance de Nuatja, tous ces groupements mériteraient le nom de 'Ouatchi', qui désigne encore actuellement les habitants de la région de Nuatja; mais le mot 'Ouatchi' est souvent utilisé par les Mina d'Anécho comme un terme de moquerie à l'égard d'un paysan primitif aux manières rudes ou gauches; si bien que

<sup>1</sup> Spieth, *Die Ewé Stämme*, Berlin, 1906.



les groupements nommés ci-dessus n'aiment point qu'on les désigne sous cette étiquette ethnique qui éviterait pourtant bien des confusions. Ils préfèrent être appelés 'Ewé'.

En 1930, Mr. Merlo, Administrateur des Colonies, en service au Dahomey, demandait au Gouvernement de la Gold Coast ce que l'on savait au sujet de l'origine des populations parlant la langue Ewé établies au Togo britannique. Par lettre du 29 Septembre 1930, Mr. Newlands, Chief Commissioner, en service à Kumasi, répondait à Mr. Merlo: '... The exodus from Nuatche is, as a rule, the starting point at which every account of the history of the Ewe peoples commences. ...'

Le 30 avril 1934, une lettre de Mr. Judd, District Commissioner en service à Kéta, précisait à Mr. Merlo que les Awuna de la région de Kéta sont également originaires de Nuatja.

Telles sont en résumé les traditions des populations établies entre les cours inférieurs de l'Ouémé et de la Volta. Il est significatif que les traditions des Yoruba, qui furent les spectateurs relativement immobiles de ces migrations, nous fournissent un témoignage concordant parfaitement avec les traditions des populations du bas-Dahomey et du bas-Togo.

### *Traditions Yoruba*

Les traditions Yoruba, rapportées par le Pasteur africain Samuel Johnson, dans *History of the Yorubas*<sup>1</sup> indiquent que c'est la métropole d'Ifê, capitale religieuse de tout le pays Yoruba, qui doit être considérée comme le centre commun de dispersion de la plupart des populations comprises entre le Niger et la Volta.

Selon Johnson, les princes Yoruba seraient originaires de l'Arabie; ils auraient été expulsés de leur dernier habitat antérieur par des Musulmans. Johnson affirme que les habitants de Gogobiri (le Gober) et de Kukawa (Kouka, sur la rive sud-ouest du lac Tchad, terminus de la piste caravanière venant de Tripoli) ont les mêmes tatouages que les Yoruba et leur sont apparentés.

Aussi est-il curieux de lire dans le livre de Maurice Abadie, *La Colonie du Niger*,<sup>2</sup> que les traditions des Goberaoua, aussi bien que celles des Touba du Bornou, affirment que leurs anciens princes étaient originaires de l'Arabie.

On peut évidemment se demander si, dans ces traditions orales, l'Arabie ne désigne pas simplement la vaste région islamisée s'étendant à l'est du lac Tchad; cependant, il n'est pas permis de nier à priori que les fondateurs des familles régnantes ne puissent être des fugitifs originaires d'Arabie, qui — après avoir imposé leur autorité aux populations au milieu desquelles ils s'étaient réfugiés — se sont rapidement métissés, au point de perdre les caractéristiques du type arabe.

A la page 8, Johnson écrit que selon la tradition Yoruba, Odudua, après s'être enfui d'Arabie, alla fonder la ville d'Ifê, en Nigéria, et devint le grand-père de sept rois qui se partagèrent toute la région. Le sixième, Olu-Popo, obtint la région des Popo, au bas-Dahomey, ainsi que les perles précieuses du trésor laissé en héritage par Odudua. C'est Odédé, plus connu sous le nom d'Oranyan, le dernier des petits-fils d'Odudua, qui obtint en partage le pays d'Ifê, ce qui lui valut le titre d'Alâfin ou

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, Samuel, *History of the Yorubas from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Occupation*, London, 1921.

<sup>2</sup> Abadie, Maurice, *Afrique Centrale: la colonie du Niger*, Paris, 1927, pp. 123, 128.



‘ Maître de la maison ’. (La maison désigne le palais royal d’Ifê.) Par la suite, Oranyan fonda la ville d’Oyo-Adjaka, (l’ancienne Oyo, ou Katunga, détruite par les Peuls en 1831) qui devint la capitale politique de tout le pays Yoruba, et donna, semble-t-il, son nom aux habitants : Yo-ruba.

Parce qu’Oranyan avait obtenu le trône ancestral d’Ifê, il devint de ce fait le bénéficiaire de tous les présents que ses frères — les rois des provinces extérieures — devaient envoyer chaque année, selon la coutume, pour participer aux frais des cérémonies en l’honneur de l’ancêtre commun Odudua.

A propos de cette tradition qui fait venir d’Arabie les ancêtres des Yoruba, il convient de rappeler que la région d’Ifê est très riche en souvenirs archéologiques dont l’origine n’est pas encore expliquée — obélisques de granit aux formes rares (le plus grand : la stèle attribuée au roi Oranyan, a un fût de près de 4 mètres de hauteur qui présente la particularité d’être incurvé et qui en outre est ornée de bas en haut par des rangées de clous de fer dont la tête est formée par un enroulement en spirale de l’extrémité de la tige); statues humaines de granit en 3/4 de grandeur, dont les cheveux sont des clous de fer à tête en spirale; statuettes d’animaux; sièges de pierre ne possédant qu’une seule anse latérale; superbes figures de terre cuite aux yeux fermés; nombreux masques de cuivre et de bronze; tous ces objets témoignant à la fois du souci du détail et du fini du travail.

En outre, on a découvert depuis près d’un siècle, dans la région d’Esié (à 50 km au sud-est d’Ilorin) plus de 600 statues de pierre tendre représentant, dans un style qui semble différent de celui d’Ifê, des personnages assis hauts de 0 m. 75, des têtes humaines aux coiffures très curieuses et très variées, des animaux, des pots et des ustensiles de ménage. La présence de ces statues près d’Esié est sans doute en relation avec la destruction d’Oyo en 1831 par les Peuls musulmans et iconoclastes; mais il est impossible d’être plus affirmatif, car si Clapperton, qui visita Oyo en 1826 (février) déclare y avoir remarqué de nombreuses statues, il oublie malheureusement de nous dire si celles-ci étaient en pierre ou en bois. Malgré les incertitudes, la découverte de ces nombreuses statues en pays Yoruba ne fait que souligner l’importance de la question de l’origine des Yoruba, ou de l’origine de leurs devanciers dans ce pays.

A ce point, afin d’éclairer le problème de l’origine des Adja et des Ewé, il apparaît indispensable de préciser l’extension du terme ‘ Popo ’, d’après les indications des traditions locales.

R. E. Dennett,<sup>1</sup> dans son livre *At the Back of the Black Man’s Mind* ajoute en appendice une courte étude du Bishop James Johnson, intitulée ‘ Yoruba Heathenism ’, écrite aux environs de 1900, dans laquelle les habitants de Grand-Popo sont appelés : ‘ The Egun or Popo tribe ’, le terme Egun étant donné comme le synonyme du mot ‘ Popo ’. Or, nous savons que les habitants de Porto-Novo, originaires de Tadô, son appelés Gun-nu, expression qui signifie : gens de Gun.

Signalons que jusqu’à ces dernières années, le crieur public du village de Segbohoulé (localité située sur la rive est du lac Ahen-mé, au Dahomey) avant de commencer ses annonces, criait afin d’attirer l’attention des gens : ‘ Attention, je vais vous parler la langue de Gun ’; simple formule traditionnelle qui ne l’empêchait pas de se servir du dialecte local ordinaire.

Cherchant à savoir, près du prince Justin Aho d’Abomey, quelle pouvait être la

<sup>1</sup> Dennett, A. E., *At the Back of the Black Man’s Mind*, London, 1906.



signification de ce mot 'Gun', je ne fus pas peu surpris de l'entendre dire: 'Je ne sais pas ce que signifie exactement ce mot; mais ce qui est certain, c'est que tous les vrais Fon méritent le qualificatif de 'Gun', au même titre que les Allada-nu et que les Gun-nu de Porto-Novo.'

Remarquons qu'en Yoruba, Ogun est à la fois le dieu de la guerre, des guerriers, des chasseurs, des forgerons et de tout objet en fer, particulièrement des armes de guerre. Un guerrier est appelé 'Ol'Ogun' ou bien 'Dja-gun Dja-gun'. S'il est établi que les fondateurs de Tadô furent des guerriers-chasseurs, c'est probablement dans ce radical Yoruba 'Gun' qu'il faut rechercher l'étymologie de l'expression 'Gun-nu', qui signifierait alors: 'homme du dieu de la guerre, de la chasse et du fer'.

D'autre part, le Rév. Père Moulero, missionnaire africain de race Yoruba résidant à Savé, Dahomey, me signalait récemment qu'il existe à Savé un petit quartier du nom de Djalumon, habité par des gens originaires de la région des Adja de Tadô, et que les Yoruba de Savé les saluent toujours par la formule traditionnelle: 'Oku Adja-nu, Omon Oni-Popo', expression Yoruba qui veut dire: 'Bonjour, personne Adja, fils d'Oni-Popo'.

Ces différentes indications venues de toutes les directions nous permettent de conclure qu'aux yeux des Yoruba, les mots: Adja, Gun, Popo sont des termes désignant globalement leurs voisins de l'Ouest, considérés comme des émigrés du pays Yoruba.

En janvier 1945, dans une étude sur le Gbadu présentée au congrès des Africanistes réuni à Dakar, j'ai indiqué que les croyances religieuses des Adja, Popo, Ewé se rattachent étroitement aux croyances religieuses des Yoruba. Récemment dans un article confié aux *Notes Africaines*, j'ai mis en relief la proche parenté existant entre les divers dialectes Adja-Ewé et la langue Yoruba, parenté affirmée dès 1927 par Westermann dans *Die westlichen Sudansprachen*.

Or, les traditions unanimes des Yoruba et Adja-Ewé nous ont permis de leur côté d'affirmer également une proche parenté ethnique entre les Yoruba et leurs voisins de l'Ouest.

Mais, après avoir dégagé la concordance générale des traditions des Adja, Popo, Ewé, Yoruba concernant leur communauté d'origine et leur parenté ethnique, il ne sera pas superflu de suivre aussi historiquement que possible, cette migration des populations partant du pays Yoruba dans la direction de l'Ouest.

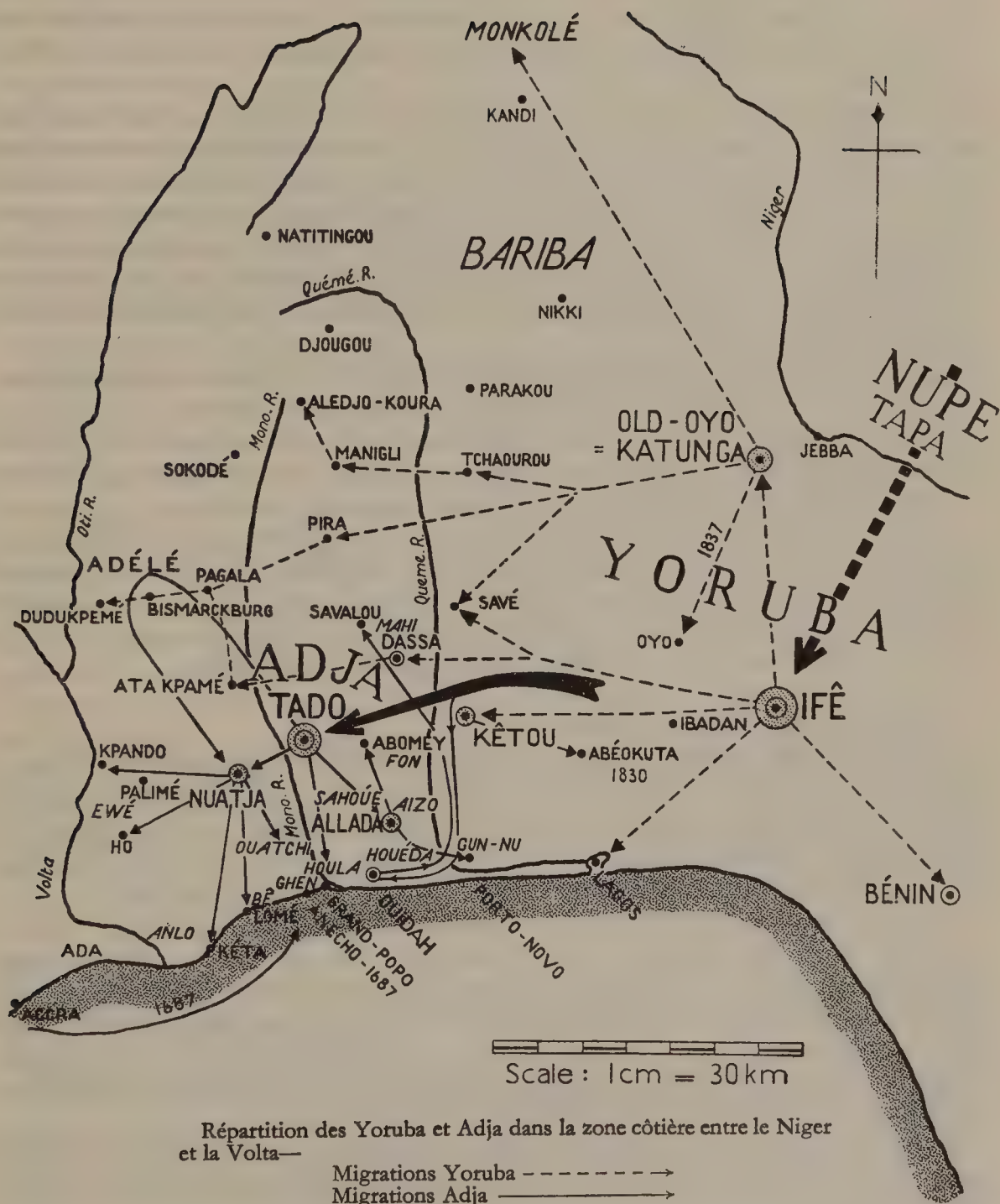
### *Migrations des Populations du pays Yoruba*

La première étape importante des Adja-Popo, en partant d'Ifê, se situe dans la région de Kétou, au Dahomey, à l'est du fleuve Ouémé. A une dizaine de kilomètres au nord-est de Kétou, on trouve, entaillées dans le sol latéritique, de nombreuses tombes anciennes que les Yoruba, habitants actuels de Kétou, attribuent aux Adja. On trouve aussi dans la même région les vestiges d'anciennes fortifications.

Au bout d'un laps de temps qu'il est difficile d'apprécier, mais qui ne dut pas dépasser la durée de deux générations, les Adja-Popo, traversant le fleuve Ouémé, se déplacèrent à nouveau vers l'Ouest, et leur roi alla établir sa résidence à Tadô, à 12 kilomètres environ à l'est du fleuve Mono.

S'il est certain que le groupement le plus important se fixait dans la région de Tadô, il est très probable que des groupes plus ou moins nombreux se dispersèrent alors dans toute la région du Sud, à la recherche de terrains de culture et de zones de chasse





ou de pêche. Il semble que c'est à cette époque de l'exode de la région de Kétou qu'il faut faire remonter l'établissement des Houéda dans la région côtière du Dahomey, et celui des Ada et des Gan, jusque dans la région d'Accra, à l'ouest de l'embouchure de la Volta.

Il est bien difficile de dire si, avant la venue des Adja-Popo, la région était déjà habitée. Comme indications à ce sujet, les Adja sont réduits à nous raconter leurs nombreuses légendes au sujet des 'Aghê' ou 'Aziza', petits hommes au teint cuivré qui dans la brousse habitaient des cases en forme de grandes termitières. Ils connaissaient parfaitement les plantes médicinales du pays, et jusqu'à notre époque ils sont considérés comme les vrais propriétaires du sol; c'est pourquoi l'on continue à leur porter des offrandes de nourriture au pied de certaines termitières désignées spécialement par les devins.

A partir de la fondation de la ville d'Abomey vers 1680, Tadô diminua d'importance et se trouva séparé du pays Yoruba par le royaume du Dahomey. Ce fut le roi d'Abomey qui se trouva dès lors obligé de payer le tribut annuel que les Adja devaient au roi d'Oyo: ce tribut annuel comprenait vers 1720: 41 hommes, 41 femmes, 41 fusils, des perles rouges anciennes (*Lankan*), 400 sacs de cauris.

Grâce aux razzias entreprises en vue de la chasse aux esclaves, le roi d'Abomey put s'acquitter de ce lourd tribut jusque sous le règne de Ghézo (1818-1858); mais aux environs de 1820 les Peuls venus de Sokoto attaquaient le royaume Yoruba et s'emparaient d'Ilorin; en 1831, la destruction d'Oyo, l'ancienne capitale, par les Peuls établis à Ilorin marquait la ruine de la puissance des Yoruba.

### *L'Exode au Nuatja, métropole secondaire*

C'est probablement sous le règne de Kpo-Djen, la panthère rouge, le 9<sup>e</sup> des rois de Tadô, que se produisit l'exode en direction de Nuatja, ville qui devait devenir le centre commun de dispersion de la plupart des populations du bas Togo. Les fugitifs ont probablement traversé le fleuve Mono au gué de Tohun-Tététu, car les traditions mentionnent explicitement Tététu dans l'itinéraire des émigrants.

L'exode de Tadô se fit en plusieurs fois<sup>1</sup> et au début les premiers groupes de fugitifs demeurèrent dispersés et indépendants les uns des autres. C'est ainsi que, tandis qu'un groupe important s'établissait à Nuatja, les Dogbonyigbo (ou Dogbo) ancêtres des Bê et des Anlo (ou Awuna) remontaient jusque dans l'Adélé (région montagneuse située sur la rive est de l'Oti, au nord du 8<sup>e</sup> degré). Bientôt, probablement dans un but de défense commune, tous ces groupements épars se rassemblèrent à Nuatja, sous l'autorité suprême du fondateur de la ville.

A cette époque, Nuatja englobait donc, non seulement les Ouatchi proprement dits, mais aussi les Dogbo, ancêtres des Bê et des Anlo, ainsi que les Ho, les Kpando et les Kpalimé.

La ville de Nuatja fut entourée d'un fossé et d'une muraille d'argile, d'où les noms de *Gli-mé* (dans le mur) et de *Agbo-mé* (à l'intérieur du portail) que lui donne la tradition. On peut voir encore actuellement les vestiges du retranchement qui avait une douzaine de kilomètres de longueur.<sup>2</sup> Chaque groupement familial s'était établi dans un quartier distinct sous l'autorité du chef de la collectivité; cependant les chefs

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Henri Kwakumé, *Le Guide du Togo*, Nos. 17-23, 1935-6.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. plan publié dans les *Notes africaines*, No. 26, 1945.



de quartier reconnaissaient tous la haute autorité du roi, choisi dans la descendance du fondateur de Nuatja.

Pendant plusieurs générations la concorde régna dans la cité; mais à la suite de l'augmentation de la population, des rivalités naquirent et une crise d'autorité se produisit. Un roi cruel, connu sous le nom de Agokoli, monta sur le trône et fit mettre à mort la plupart des vieux chefs de quartiers, dont les critiques lui semblaient intolérables. La tradition l'accuse de caprices tyranniques et de ruses perverses. Un jour, son fils s'étant battu avec le fils de Sri, Agokoli présenta au peuple le cadavre d'un garçon mort de maladie, prétendant que c'était le cadavre de son fils mort des suites des coups reçus, et il exigea la mise à mort du fils de Sri, selon la loi du talion. Mais la fourberie du roi fut découverte et provoqua le mécontentement général.

Le mécontentement devint tel que la plupart des collectivités familiales décidèrent d'abandonner une ville qui, de refuge et de protection, était devenue pour eux une odieuse prison. Comme l'unique porte de la ville était gardée jour et nuit, les mécontents tinrent conseil et ordonnèrent à leurs femmes de jeter, pendant plusieurs jours, toutes les eaux de lessive et de vaisselle au pied d'une même portion de la muraille, en arrière du quartier habité par les futurs fondateurs de Ho. Pour s'assurer que le mur était suffisamment ramolli, un certain Awédé, chef des Banyakoé, enfonça son épée à travers le mur; et alors au début de la nuit suivante, tandis que les uns jouaient bruyamment du tam-tam afin de détourner l'attention des partisans d'Agokoli, Aso, chef des Ho, et Akoe, chef des Akoviéwé, aidés de leurs gens, vinrent pousser de toutes forces contre la muraille qui s'écroula.

On dit que ce sont les gens de Ho, dont le quartier se trouvait à proximité de la brèche, qui sortirent les premiers; puis les Akoviéwé. Les Bê, qui sortirent les derniers, répandirent des céréales écrasées sur le sentier afin d'échapper à la poursuite des gens d'Agokoli. A l'aube, en effet, des tourterelles à collier (*pépélélu-galéko*) vinrent picorer sur le sentier et de leurs pattes et de leurs ailes effacèrent la trace des pas des fugitifs. C'est pourquoi les gens de Bê ne tuent, ni ne mangent les tourterelles de cette espèce.

### *Fuite de Nuatja*

Bientôt, les fugitifs trop nombreux durent se partager en plusieurs groupes qui prirent trois directions principales.

Wenya et Sri, chefs des Dogbonyigbo (ou Dogbo) prirent la direction du Sud et fondèrent dans la région lagunaire, qui devint le territoire des Anlo ou Awuna, les villages de Kliko, Gapé, Wéta, Sômé, Agbosômé, Avé, Penyi, Kpikpi, Mafi, Tsiamé, Agavé, Woé, Tavia, Tokoé, Tanygba, Kéta, Dzélukopé, Awuna, Anlo, Atiteti, Tegbi. Les fils de Sri réussirent à emporter de Nuatja le siège ancestral de leur collectivité.

Plus tard des émigrés de Kéta devaient fonder les villages de Badugbé, Akoda, Zalivé, Atsukopé, Angrokopé, entre Bê et Anécho. Ce sont également des Anlo qui établirent les villages de Viépé, Avoéme, Avekutimé, Avéghui. Tandis que Sri s'établissait à Kéta, des chefs appartenant également à la collectivité des Dogbonyigbo fondèrent les centres de Tsévié et de Bê. Les gens de Tsévié créèrent ensuite les villages de Wuli, Bolu, Asômé, Gblavié et Dadavié. De leur côté, les gens de Bê édifiaient les villages de Lomé, Togo, Agoéyivé, Baghida.

Un deuxième groupe de fugitifs, sous la direction du chef Kakla et du chef Awédé prit la direction du Sud-Ouest; et après avoir séjourné plusieurs mois dans la brousse, fonda les villages de Ho, Akovia, Takla, Kpénoé, Hodzo, Klévi, Sokodé, Abutia, Adaklu, Banyakoé, Hévé, Ahloé, Ahliha, Dômé. Les gens de Péki, bien que métissés avec des étrangers, semblent appartenir au même groupe.

L'épée avec laquelle le chef Awédé perça le mur de Nuatja serait toujours conservée à Banyakoé par ses descendants. Quant aux ancêtres des Ho, ils auraient aussi emporté de Nuatja une pierre du tonnerre (pierre polie) et un siège royal, lequel serait actuellement la propriété des gens de Dômé.

D'après les traditions rapportées par le Pasteur Spieth, pendant leur migration à travers la brousse, les gens de ce deuxième groupeensemencèrent des haricots (*Ayi*) et tinrent à demeurer en place jusqu'à la récolte. C'est pourquoi leurs voisins les appellent *Ayi-gbé* (gens de haricots); mais les intéressés n'admettent pas ce genre de plaisanterie et préfèrent être simplement appelés 'Ewé'.

Le troisième groupe prit la direction de l'Ouest et fonda les villages de Gbi, Petyi, Awudomé, Guin, Atyem, Alavagnon, Kpando, Kpalimé, Agu, Vé, Léklébi, Logba, Savi, Dzolo, Akomé, Kpédzé, Matsé, Kpétsi, Wodzé.

C'est aux descendants des partisans d'Agokoli demeurés à Nuatja que l'on attribue plus particulièrement la dénomination de Ouatchi, terme qui n'est d'ailleurs qu'une déformation du mot Nuatja, prononcé aussi: Nuatchen, Nuatché, Notsié, Notchen, Ouatchen, ou Hotché.

Les habitants de Nuatja continuèrent à augmenter en nombre, si bien que les terrains de culture devinrent encore insuffisants. Mais au cours de cette dernière période, c'est une émigration lente et pacifique qui, par petits groupes successifs, orienta le surplus de la population dans la direction du Sud-Est. C'est ainsi que furent créés les villages Ouatchi de Dalia, Tchekpo, Akumapé, Akpédomé, Vogan, Vokutimé, Vo-Ativé, Vo-Aso, Vo-Gba, Vo-dômé, Dagbati, Afowimé, Momé; ainsi que Kpovidji, Komé, Oumako, etc., à l'est du Mono, entre les rivières Sazué et Couffo.

Il importe de bien remarquer que les migrations que nous avons indiquées ci-dessus, n'ont que la valeur d'un schéma qui ne peut pas rendre intégralement compte d'une réalité beaucoup plus complexe. En effet, nous trouvons, d'une part, de nombreuses ramifications de populations, parlant encore une langue Yoruba à peu près pure, s'avancant à travers le Dahomey et le Togo jusque dans l'Adélé: Dassa, Banté, Ana, Atakpa, etc. Tous les 7 ans, ces divers groupes d'origine Yoruba organisent un grand pèlerinage qui se rend dans les montagnes de l'Adélé, vers une grotte fameuse, située au Togo britannique (au sud-est de Bismarckburg), afin d'y vénérer leur divinité Mawu-Dudua. Les personnes, qui depuis le dernier pèlerinage ont été accusées de sorcellerie, sont obligées de participer au voyage, et la plupart d'entre elles n'en reviennent jamais. Les derniers grands pèlerinages ont eu lieu en 1939 et 1946.

D'autre part, nous rencontrons de nombreux villages composés presque uniquement d'Adja ou de Fon dans tout l'Ouest du Togo; ainsi que des quartiers importants d'Adja, de Fon, de Houéda, de Houla établis à côté des villages fondés par des émigrés de Nuatja, dans toute la région de l'Ouest du Togo, jusqu'à la ligne de chemin de fer allant de Lomé à Atakpamé.



Enfin, il existe, à l'ouest du fleuve Mono, un îlot hétérogène de fugitifs venus presque en même temps de la Gold Coast. Ce sont d'abord des Ghen (ou Ga) originaires d'Accra, qui fuyant les Aquambo, vers 1687, sous la conduite du chef Foli-Bébé, s'établissent à Glidji (sur le versant nord de la lagune d'Anécho, au Togo) avec l'autorisation de Meto-Awusan, roi des Houla ou Popo d'Agbanaken. Les Ghen avaient apporté avec eux d'Accra un siège minuscule en ivoire, égaré depuis plusieurs années, ainsi qu'un siège de bois à cinq pieds, jadis lamé d'or, conservé au village de Zowula, près de Glidji. Ce siège est orné, entre ses 4 pieds d'angles, de personnages sculptés armés de fusils, le tout formant une seule pièce de bois avec le siège.

Quelques années plus tard, des Anè, Fanti originaires d'Elmina, conduits par leur chef Quam-Désu, se fixent au bord de la mer, à Anécho (*Anè-ho*: la maison des Anè) avec la double autorisation de Foli-Bébé, roi de Glidji, et du roi des Houla de Grand-Popo. Par la suite, des querelles s'élevèrent entre les habitants d'Anécho, et des Adjigo, obligés d'abandonner la ville, fondèrent les centres d'Agoué en 1821 et de Porto-Ségouro (Agbodrafo) en 1835.

### *La question politique des Ewé*

Nous avons indiqué, au début de cette étude, la confusion à laquelle peut se prêter le mot 'Ewé', terme géographique, signifiant au sens strict: la plaine — la plaine du bas Togo, mais employé par extension pour désigner, sans autre discrimination, tous les habitants de cette plaine.

Profitant de cette confusion possible, on a créé de toute pièce un mythe Ewé, au nom duquel on prétend discuter non seulement les frontières actuelles du bas Togo<sup>1</sup> mais encore la frontière du Togo Nord qui n'est plus en pays Ewé; et même la frontière dahoméenne de l'ancien Togo allemand, sous prétexte que le pays Ewé aurait le Mono comme frontière naturelle à l'Est.

A propos de cette frontière fluviale, remarquons en passant que les fleuves africains — ceux de faible débit, tout au moins — loin de constituer des barrières ethniques, sont plutôt des voies de communication et des lieux de regroupement. C'est ainsi que sur les deux rives du Mono, on trouve des Houla (ou Pla, ou Popo) dans la région de l'embouchure, des Ouatchi à la hauteur de Vodomé, des Adja à la hauteur de Tohun-Tadô; mais nulle part de véritables Ewé, lesquels se sont fixés à la pointe extrême du mouvement vers l'Ouest de la migration Adja.

De plus, sans nier pour autant la valeur relative du schéma de répartition des populations que nous avons présenté pour la région Sud du Togo et du Dahomey, il faut reconnaître néanmoins que nous nous trouvons en réalité en présence d'une telle interpénétration des différents groupements qu'il est absolument impossible d'établir une frontière ethnique ou linguistique en un point quelconque du territoire occupé actuellement par les groupements originaires de Tadô, depuis l'Ouémé jusqu'à la Volta. On trouve, en effet, par exemple, des Ouatchi jusqu'au Couffo; des Adja, venus directement de Tadô, sans passer par Nuatja, jusqu'à la ligne du chemin de fer allant de Lomé à Atakpamé; des Houla (ou Pla, ou Popo) depuis Afla-hun (*Hula-hun*:

<sup>1</sup> La région habitée au Togo par les populations dites de langue Ewé est comprise entre les 6<sup>e</sup> et 8<sup>e</sup> degrés de latitude, alors que le Togo dépasse le 11<sup>e</sup>

degré vers le Nord, traversant les territoires des Dagomba et des Cabré.

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la Porte des Pla) à l'ouest de Lomé, jusqu'à Porto-Novo; des Houéda (de Ouidah)  
jusqu'aux environs de Vogan.

Comme pour de nombreux territoires africains, il n'est pas douteux qu'il y a pour le Togo également un problème de frontières. Mais les frontières du Togo débordent de toutes parts le territoire Ewé, et vouloir donner à ce problème de frontières le nom de question Ewé, c'est accepter de substituer à de solides arguments d'ordre traditionnel, historique, ethnique, linguistique, les excitations obscures et passionnées d'un mythe créé pour la circonstance.

C'est dès 1857 que Schlegel transcrivait le nom de la ville de Ouidah, au Dahomey, en 'Ewé-ta', mot qu'il traduisait dès lors par l'expression 'La tête de la nation Ewé'. Les significations de la syllabe Da sont pourtant assez nombreuses en dialecte Houéda, comme en dialecte Ewé, et il n'y avait aucune raison de faire cette mutation tendancieuse, alors que les deux lettres 'T et D' sont parfaitement distinctes dans les dialectes de la région.

De là, à faire de Ouidah la capitale du pays Ewé, ou du moins à faire de la région de Ouidah une province du pays Ewé, il n'y avait pas loin; aussi n'y a-t-il plus à s'étonner si en 1911, Mr. Rickers, gérant d'une firme allemande de Lomé, se permettait d'écrire dans le *Berliner Lokalanzeiger*: 'Le Dahomey est très sain, plus peuplé, plus cultivé que le Congo français et d'un rendement bien supérieur. Ce qui rend le *Dahomey absolument désirable*, c'est que le Togo en serait arrondi et serait ainsi indépendant des colonies voisines au point de vue politique et économique. On le voit par la carte, le Togo par sa forme longue et mince est toujours obligé de se heurter aux voisins. Cette raison serait déjà suffisante pour demander un agrandissement du Togo au lieu d'aller chercher un agrandissement au Kameroun, cette dernière colonie est assez grande pour se suffire toute seule. Si toutefois la compensation doit se trouver au Congo français, nos hommes d'État doivent être assez forts pour obtenir une rectification de frontière dans le sens que Grand-Popo avec son hinterland revienne au Togo. Dès maintenant, le commerce de Grand-Popo est en grande partie entre les mains allemandes; sur huit grandes factoreries, quatre sont allemandes. En plus, la population de Grand-Popo est de race Ewé, la même qui forme l'Est et le Sud de notre Togo. La frontière actuelle n'est donc *pas naturelle*, puisqu'elle divise un peuple en deux. Le vrai territoire dahoméen a ses frontières à Ouidah.'<sup>1</sup>

Dans le même genre d'obscur fantaisie, nous lisons sous la plume de Mr. Ward,<sup>2</sup> dans un ouvrage destiné aux écoliers de la Gold Coast: 'The capital of the old Ewe kingdom was a town called Agbomé, which is in the French colony of Dahomey.'

Évidemment, il serait facile d'utiliser de pareils textes pour renverser l'argumentation des leaders de l'Union des Ewé afin de revendiquer le rattachement du territoire des Ewé au Dahomey; mais cette étude n'a pas pour objet des revendications territoriales, elle vise uniquement à la recherche de la vérité concernant une question que certains ont intérêt à embrouiller et à maintenir dans l'obscurité.

Le premier document sérieux que nous connaissons sur la question Ewé est la carte que l'auteur anglais, Ellis, publie en 1890, entre la préface et l'introduction de son livre: *The Ewe-speaking peoples*.

Cette carte distingue très bien, d'une part, un groupement proprement Ewé, désigné par le mot: Ewé-awo, situé dans la région de Ho, au nord de Péki; d'autre

<sup>1</sup> Maroix, *Le Togo*, 1938, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> Ward, *Short History of the Gold Coast*, 1940, p. 1.



part, les groupements qu'il appelle *Ewe-speaking tribes* habitant toute cette vaste région comprise entre le pays Ewé proprement dit et le fleuve Okpara ou Ouémé.

C'est bien, en effet, dans la région de Ho, Kpando et Kpalimé que se situe le territoire des vrais Ewé. C'est ainsi que jusque vers 1900, on distingue nettement le territoire des Anlo ou Awuna de la région de Kéta, du territoire des Ewé, et Spieth<sup>1</sup> nous montre les Anlo ou Awuna de la région de Kéta en guerre continuelle contre les Ewé de la région de Ho. Dans le récit du combat de Hléfi, il dit en particulier : ' Avant le combat, les Ewé se divisèrent en trois bataillons et restèrent dans cet ordre de guerre du matin jusqu'au coucher du soleil. Alors qu'ils se trouvaient ainsi prêts pour le combat, Dzokoto, un chef Anlo, observa de bien près les guerriers Ewé, eut peur et dit : Tenez, regardez les Ewé, nous ne pouvons rien contre eux, ils sont plus forts que nous. Mais Gbadago, un autre chef Anlo, répondit à Dzokoto : Nous voulons quand même nous essayer avec les Ewé, rien ne doit être abandonné avant d'avoir été essayé.' Paroles qui mettent bien en relief les distinctions nécessaires.

Ainsi donc, la carte d'Ellis, les récits de Spieth concordent avec les indications que peuvent fournir, encore actuellement, tous les anciens du bas Togo, pour établir que le territoire des Ewé est limité à la région de Ho, Kpando, Kpalimé.

Quant à la dénomination de Ewé donnée arbitrairement à l'ensemble des populations établies entre la Volta et l'Ouémé, elle trouve son explication dans ce fait purement accidentel que le dialecte des Ewé de la région de Ho a été le premier et le mieux étudié par Schlegel, dès 1857, par Ellis en 1890, et surtout par Westermann en 1906 dans un ouvrage de 638 pages *Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch*. Il en est résulté cette anomalie que le dialecte parlé par le groupement le plus avancé vers l'Ouest de toute la migration Adja a acquis une primauté factice ; et dans la classification des langues africaines, le dialecte Ewé a donné son nom à un ' sous-groupe Ewé ', dans lequel on fait rentrer en vrac, comme dans un sac, le Mahi, le Fon, le Mina ou Ghen, le Krépé ou Kpando et l'Ewé proprement dit, alors qu'on ne fait même pas mention du vieux dialecte Adja de la région de Tadô, qui est cependant à l'origine de tous les dialectes parlés par les divers groupements issus de la métropole de Tadô.<sup>2</sup>

Un arbitre qui ne peut être soupçonné de partialité a porté un jugement décisif dans ce débat. L'Américain, Melville Herskovits, écrit en effet en 1938, ' Fon is related to Ewe, which has been studied above all by Professor D. Westermann. *It is not, however, Ewe*; and the statements that one encounters to this effect, or to the effect that the Dahomeans speak a dialect of Ewe, are the result of a curious historical accident. The Ewe-speaking tribes are found in eastern Togoland, a former German colony, and since German scholars were most active in West African linguistic research, they gave to all related tongues the name of the tongue prevailing in this colony where they worked.

' However, since these Togoland tribes represent outposts of Dahomean civilization, we have here *the practice of calling the language of the larger group by the name of the smaller*; as though, for example, it were to be said that French was a dialect of Norman, or German a dialect of Flemish.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. l'article de l'auteur, ' *Adja-Tadô* : Races et langues du Bas Dahomey et du Bas Congo ', *Notes*

*africaines*, No. 26, 1945.

<sup>3</sup> Herskovits, M., *Dahomey*, New York, 1938.

*Conclusions*

Nous tenons tout d'abord à bien préciser que nous sommes d'accord pour reconnaître que la plupart des frontières actuelles des colonies africaines ont été établies sans un souci convenable des indications qu'aurait pu fournir une étude du relief du sol, de la linguistique, des traditions, de l'histoire ou des besoins économiques des régions soumises au partage. Le partage a été fait, avant toute autre préoccupation, en fonction des intérêts rivaux des nations colonisatrices; les intérêts propres des habitants ont toujours été laissés plus ou moins à l'arrière-plan.

*A priori*, on peut donc admettre qu'un désir de regroupement plus rationnel est parfaitement légitime de la part des intéressés; mais il serait funeste que des revendications, légitimes dans leur principe, soient exploitées ou canalisées dans le but de servir des intérêts égoïstes. On corrige très mal une première erreur, en faisant une seconde erreur.

Pour le cas particulier du Togo, nous ne faisons aucune difficulté à reconnaître que la frontière politique de 1918, qui a séparé l'ancien Togo allemand en deux, ne respecte pas au mieux les intérêts des habitants, et ne se justifie pleinement que comme un compromis entre les intérêts français et les intérêts anglais qui se sont partagé les anciens intérêts allemands. Il n'est pas douteux, en effet, que ce partage supplémentaire de 1918 aggravait aux yeux des indigènes le caractère arbitraire des décisions du Congrès international de Berlin qui a consacré le partage de l'Afrique en 1885.

Ceci admis, il nous apparaît impossible d'aboutir à une solution convenable si le problème particulier des frontières du Togo n'est pas entièrement intégré dans le problème général des frontières africaines.

Comme nous l'avons indiqué, en effet, pour le cas du Togo Sud, en raison de la parenté et de l'interpénétration des multiples groupements intéressés, il est impossible de légitimer la création d'une frontière ethnique ou linguistique en un point quelconque de la région comprise entre le fleuve Volta et le fleuve Ouémé; de plus, toute solution proposée éventuellement pour le Sud laisserait entière la question des frontières du Togo Nord, région également importante et qui possède autant d'habitants que le Togo Sud.

Il est donc souhaitable que l'un et l'autre des États colonisateurs intéressés acceptent d'envisager, dans un proche avenir, une solution de ce problème complexe, dans le vaste cadre du problème général des frontières africaines.

*Résumé*

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE YORUBA AND  
THE PEOPLES OF LOWER DAHOMEY AND TOGO

THE author gives an historical account, based on tradition and archaeological evidence, of the migrations of the Adja, Ouatchi, and Ewe peoples from Nigeria to Togo and Dahomey. He emphasizes the mingling of ethnic groups which has taken place and points out the confusion which has been caused by the use of the word Ewe to signify an ethnic group whereas its original meaning was purely geographical. He touches on the difficult problem of the division of the Ewe peoples between French and British territories and suggests that the problem should be studied in the wider context of African territorial boundaries generally.



## A FURTHER NOTE ON JOKING RELATIONSHIPS

A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN

PROFESSOR GRIAULE's article on 'L'Alliance cathartique' in *Africa* of October 1948 raises a methodological point of considerable importance. If we wish to understand a custom or institution that we find in a particular society there are two ways of dealing with it. One is to examine the part it plays in the system or complex of customs and institutions in which it is found and the meaning that it has within this complex for the people themselves. Professor Griaule deals in this way with the custom by which the Bozo and the Dogon exchange insults with each other. He considers it as an element in a complex of customs, institutions, myths, and ideas to which the Dogon themselves refer by the term *mangou*. He shows us also what meaning the natives themselves attribute to this exchange of insults (p. 253). As a piece of analysis the article is admirable, and is a most important contribution to our growing knowledge of West African society.

But there is another method open to us, namely, to make a wide comparative study of all those types of social relationship in which two persons are by custom permitted, or even required, to use speech or behaviour which in other relationships would be grievously offensive. To the use of this method it would seem that Professor Griaule objects. Referring to what has already been written on the comparative study of what are called 'joking relationships' or *parentés à plaisanterie* he writes: ' nous adoptons, vis-à-vis des travaux parus sur cette question, une attitude négative.'

Ethnographers had reported from North America, Oceania, and Africa instances of a custom by which persons standing in certain relationships resulting either from kinship, or more usually from marriage, were permitted or required to behave towards one another in a disrespectful or insulting way at which no offence might be taken. Such relationships came to be called 'joking relationships', admittedly not a very good name. The most numerous and widespread examples of this custom were in the relationship of a man to the brothers and sisters of his wife. But it was also found in some instances between cross-cousins, between mother's brother and sister's son, and in a somewhat milder form between grandparents and grandchildren. There thus arose a problem of comparative sociology: what is there in all these relationships that makes this type of behaviour appropriate, meaningful, and functional?

One of the first facts that strikes the sociological inquirer is that the custom of 'joking' with the wife's brothers and sisters is very commonly associated with a custom of strict avoidance of the wife's mother, frequently of the wife's father, and more occasionally the wife's mother's brother. Since it is clear that the avoidance custom and the joking custom are direct contraries, or polar opposites, the problem immediately became one of dealing with both these types of custom. And this in turn made it necessary to consider certain other kinds of relationships.

I became interested in this whole set of problems in 1908 when I was trying to find an explanation of customs of avoidance in the Andaman Islands. There, the parents of a man and the parents of his wife must avoid each other. Their relationship is described by the term *aka-yat*, from a stem meaning 'forbidden' and a prefix refer-

ring to the mouth and, therefore, to speech. Persons in such a relationship might not speak to each other. On the other hand I was told that they will regularly send each other presents. The explanation given by the Andamanese is: 'They are great friends because their children have married.' This conception of avoidance relationships as relationships of friendship I have found elsewhere. Thus in Australia, where a man carefully avoids all social contact with his wife's mother, I have more than once been told that she is the greatest friend he has since she has provided him with a wife. Again, the joking relationship is commonly referred to as one of friendship. 'I can tease my mother's brother and take his property because we are great friends; I am the son of his sister.' 'I can joke with my grandfather or grandmother, and they will joke with me because we are great friends.'

What does 'friendship' mean in these contexts? It is clearly something different from the relationship of solidarity and mutual help between two brothers or a father and son. On the basis of comparative analysis it seems to me that the assertion of 'friendship' means an obligation for the two persons not to enter into open quarrel or conflict with each other. It is sufficiently evident that one way of obviating open conflict between two persons is for them to avoid one another or treat each other with very marked respect. I think it is also fairly evident that a relationship in which insults are exchanged and there is an obligation not to take them seriously, is one which, by means of sham conflicts, avoids real ones.

This theory can be supported by reference to customs of other kinds, of which, to economize space, I will only mention two that are typical of one kind. In the Andamans I was told that two men who were initiated together at the same ceremony of initiation would be forbidden thereafter to speak to one another, but would regularly exchange gifts. Again the explanation was: 'They are great friends.' In South Australia there was a custom whereby two boys, born about the same time in two clans that were normally hostile, were united into a special relationship by the exchange of that portion of the umbilical cord which remains on the infant and later falls off. The two men who stand in this relationship may never speak to one another, but each may visit in safety the clan of the other carrying gifts to his friend and receiving gifts in exchange. Again the relationship is described as one of great friendship; through it each of the persons is safe in what would otherwise be hostile territory.

A careful examination of a great many instances from all over the world seems to me to justify the formulation of a general theory. But these special forms of 'friendship' can, of course, only be fully dealt with in terms of a study of forms of social relationship in general, and this is not the place in which to take up that very wide subject. Some social relationships are required by custom to be based on respect, of different degrees and expressed in different ways; others are such as to permit a certain degree of familiarity, and in extreme cases of licence. The rules of etiquette are one method of standardizing these features of social relations. The respect required of a son to his father in many African tribes must be exhibited in this way. The avoidance relationship is in one sense an extreme form of respect, while the joking relationship is a form of familiarity, permitting disrespectful behaviour, and in extreme instances, licence. It is, for example, a relationship in which, in some cases, obscenity may be freely indulged in, as between the Dogon and the Bozo. Obscene talk, in all or



most societies, is only permissible in ordinary social intercourse between persons standing in a specially familiar relationship. The prohibition against any reference to sexual matters before a father, and still more before a father-in-law, in many African societies, exemplifies this contrast between respectful and familiar or licentious behaviour.

The theory, of which I gave a brief outline in an earlier number of *Africa*,<sup>1</sup> and to which M. Griaule adopts a negative attitude, starts from the position that the customs of avoidance or extreme respect towards the wife's parents, and of privileged 'joking' with the wife's brothers and sisters, can be regarded as the means of establishing and maintaining social equilibrium in a type of structural situation that results in many societies from marriage. In this situation we have two separate and distinct social groups, families or lineages, which are brought into connexion with one another through the union of a man of one with a woman of the other. The husband is outside, and socially separated from, his wife's group. Through his relationship with her he is in an indirect or mediated relationship with individuals of her group. What is required for social equilibrium is that, as far as possible, he should not enter into conflict with his wife's group, but be obliged to maintain with that group or its members a 'friendly' relation. Both the avoidance customs and the 'joking' customs are the means by which this situation is socially regulated.

Why the difference, then, between the behaviour towards the wife's parents and that towards her brothers and sisters? The answer lies in the general principle, widely recognized, that towards relatives of the first ascending generation respect is required, whereas relations of familiarity and equality are appropriate between persons of the same generation. There are, of course, examples of exceptions to this rule, such as joking relations or privileged familiarity towards the father's sister's husband or the mother's brother.

Thus the special structural situation considered in this theory is one of groups which maintain their separateness, each having its own system of internal relationships between its members, and an indirect connexion of a person of one group with the other group through a particular personal relation. In the instance of marriage the indirect relation is that of a man through his wife. The custom of a joking relationship with the mother's brother is found in societies in which an individual belongs to a patrilineal group, and therefore has an indirect relation to his mother's group through his mother. The widespread custom of relationships of familiarity with grandparents, often taking the form of a joking relationship (in Australia, Africa, North America, the Oraons of India), emphasizes the relation of the two generations as being socially separated. The grandparents are thus placed in contrast with the relatives of the parents' generation, and the relation to one's own grandparent is an indirect one through a parent. The joking relationship between cross-cousins (Fiji, Ojibwa, &c.) is frequently a relation between possible relatives by marriage, but the relation is an indirect one through the mother or through the father's sister.

An interesting crucial instance for the theory is provided by the Crow Indians, who have matrilineal clans. A man must be respectful to all the members of his father's clan; though he is not a member of that clan his relation to its members is one of close solidarity. In the other clans of the tribe there are to be found some men who

<sup>1</sup> *Africa*, vol. xiii, No. 3, 1940, pp. 195-210.

are sons of men of his father's clan. They belong to clans that are separate and distinct, not only from his own clan but also from his father's clan. With such men, with whom his personal relation is an indirect one, through his father's clan, he has a joking relationship; he may make offensive remarks to them or receive such from them without offence. In the Crow tribe this relationship has been developed into an instrument of social control of conduct, since the joking relative may call public attention to the shortcomings of his relative.

The Cherokee also had a system of matrilineal clans, and a man was required to show respect to all the members of his father's clan. But with the clans of his father's father and his mother's father he had only an indirect connexion through a parent. He called all the women of these clans 'grandmother' and could be on a relationship of familiarity or joking with them. Since marriage with such a 'grandmother' was approved they were possible wives or sisters-in-law.

The theory that I have offered of joking relationships between persons related through marriage or by kinship is that they occur as social institutions in structural situations of a certain general kind in which there are two groups, the separateness of which is emphasized, and relations are established indirectly between a person in one group and the members or some of the members of the other. The relationship may be said to be one which expresses and emphasizes both detachment (as belonging to separated groups) and attachment (through the indirect personal relation). These relationships of 'friendship', by avoidance or joking, contrast in a marked way with the relationships of solidarity, involving a complex system of obligations, that exist within a group such as a lineage or a clan. For the further development of the theory they need to be compared also with those relations which are set up, between persons belonging to different groups, by the regular exchange of gifts. Thus the theory is only one part of an attempt to deal systematically with the types of social relationship that are to be found in primitive societies.

The great majority of instances of joking relationships that were recorded by ethnographers were relationships between individuals connected through marriage or by kinship. Hence the reference to them in French as relations of *parenté*. But there were also found instances of a similar relation between groups of persons, by which a member of one group was permitted and expected to offer insulting or derogatory remarks to any member of the other. A good example is provided by the 'coyote' and 'wild cat' moieties of Californian tribes. More recently similar customs have been reported from Africa (Northern Rhodesia, Tanganyika, West Africa)<sup>1</sup> in which this kind of relationship exists between two clans of a tribe or between two tribes. These obviously present a problem of a somewhat different kind. But it is obvious that any valid general theory of joking relationships must take into account these relations between groups.

Tribes and clans are distinct separated groups each maintaining its own identity and separateness. Within a clan the relations of its members are those of solidarity in the special sense in which I have been using that term in this note. Two clans may, in some instances, be united in a way in which there is a permanent union of solidarity between the clans as groups and the members thereof. On the other hand there may also be a relation between two clans of active or latent hostility. There is a third

<sup>1</sup> See Bibliography, p. 140.



possibility, that between two particular clans there may be a relation neither of solidarity nor of hostility but of 'friendship' in which the separateness of the groups is emphasized, but open conflict between the groups or the members on the two sides is avoided by establishing a relation in which they may insult each other without giving or taking offence. This kind of thing is well illustrated in the account of the clans of the Tallensi given by Dr. Meyer Fortes.<sup>1</sup> A similar relationship, whereby hostility is avoided, may exist between two tribes, as in the instances known from Tanganyika.<sup>2</sup> It seems to me that in this way the joking relationship between clans and tribes recorded from Africa can be brought within the scope of a single theory that refers all instances of these relationships to a certain general type of structural situation. It should be made clear that what such a theory attempts to do is to deal with all the known examples of a certain recognizable type of institutionalized relationships in order to discover what common social feature makes this type of behaviour appropriate, meaningful, and functional.

It is evident that in one particular respect the relation between the Dogon and the Bozo is similar to the relations that have been described from other parts of Africa, namely, in the exchange of insults. There is no evidence that they are similar in other respects, and they certainly are not so in all. The relation is spoken of as an 'alliance', but it is something very different from an alliance between two nations which co-operate in fighting a war against another. The term 'alliance' is therefore not entirely suitable, nor have I been able to find a really suitable term. I have used the term 'friendship' and there is justification for this in the way in which native peoples themselves speak of friendship. In Australian tribes a man may have a 'friend', that is, a person with whom he has a special personal relationship. In one region a wife's own sister's husband, if he is not a near kinsman, is such a friend. In other regions a man may not select a 'friend' from amongst the men to whom he applies the classificatory term for 'brother'. Between 'brothers' relations are fixed by the kinship system. He must choose a man who stands to him in the classificatory relation of 'brother-in-law' but not his own brother-in-law. For brothers-in-law always necessarily belong to separated groups. There is here a clear distinction made between friendship and relationships by kinship.

I am distinguishing, therefore, a certain class of what I call 'friendship' relations, from what I have called relations of 'solidarity' established by kinship or by membership of a group such as a lineage or clan. These terms are used only for the purposes of the present analysis because in this matter, as in so many others in social anthropology, no precise technical terms are yet available.

We may regard as one type of 'friendship' in this sense the relation set up between persons or groups on the basis of a continued exchange of goods or services. The world-wide custom of gift-exchange has to be considered in this connexion. But there are other varieties; one group may bury the dead of the other or perform other ritual services. In north-west America one group would call in a 'friend' group to erect a totem-pole for them. A component of the relationship between groups is very commonly a certain amount and kind of opposition, meaning by that term socially controlled and regulated antagonism. The two groups may regularly engage in

<sup>1</sup> Fortes, M. *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi*, London: Oxford University Press, 1945.

<sup>2</sup> See Bibliography, p. 140.

competitive games such as football. In *potlatch* in North America there is competition or rivalry in exchange of valuables. Social relations of friendly rivalry are of considerable theoretical importance. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge maintain a certain relation by competing regularly in rowing, football, &c. The joking relationship is thus one example of a wider kind; for it is a relation of friendship in which there is an appearance of antagonism, controlled by conventional rules.

The 'alliance' between the Dogon and the Bozo described and analysed by M. Griaule is clearly an example of what I have been referring to as 'friendship'. The Dogon and the Bozo are separate peoples distinguished by language and by their mode of life. The prohibition against intermarriage maintains this separation by preventing the creation of relations of kinship between members of the two groups. The 'friendship' appears in the prohibition, under supernatural sanction, against the shedding of the blood of a member of the allied people, and in the regular exchange of gifts and services, for example, the services that individuals of one group perform in the ritual purification of those of the other. To these is added a 'joking relationship', the exchange of insults between members of the two groups. It is with this last feature that we are concerned here.

This alliance is conceived by the two peoples concerned in terms of their own cosmological system of myths and ideas, and M. Griaule's article is an important addition to the series of publications in which he and his co-workers have given the results of their investigation of this cosmology. It is in terms of these ideas that the Dogon interpret the exchange of insults.<sup>1</sup> The exchange of insults is 'cathartic' because it rids the livers of both parties of impurities. M. Griaule has thus given us an explanation of the exchange of insults between Dogon and Bozo by showing what meaning it has to the natives themselves and also by showing its interconnexions within a complex system of institutions, ideas, and myths. He finds that the most important function of the alliance is to provide what he calls, for lack of a more suitable term, 'purification'. So, provisionally, he proposes to call this type of alliance, as found in an extensive region of Africa, 'cathartic alliance'. Doubtless he would not suggest that we should apply this name to the exchange of insults between clans among the Tallensi or Bemba, or between tribes in Tanganyika.

M. Marcel Mauss and I have both been seeking for many years to find a satisfactory general theory of what I have been calling relations of 'friendship' between separate groups or persons belonging to separate groups. One part of such a theory must be a study of prestations or exchanges of goods or services. Another must be a study of 'joking relationships'. It is towards such studies that M. Griaule adopts, as he says, 'a negative attitude'. He suggests that to classify together the various examples of 'joking relationships' and to look for a general explanation, is like classifying together the ceremonies at which church bells are rung, such as funerals and weddings, calling them all *cérémonies à cloches*. This is the question of methodology in social anthropology that seems to me so important. For M. Griaule seems to be questioning the scientific validity of the comparative method as a means of arriving at general theoretical interpretations of social institutions.

It is only by the use of a comparative method that we can arrive at general explanations. The alternative is to confine ourselves to particularistic explanations similar to

<sup>1</sup> *Africa*, vol. xviii, No. 4, pp. 253-4.



those of the historians. The two kinds of explanation are both legitimate and do not conflict; but both are needed for the understanding of societies and their institutions. That the Dogon explain the exchange of insults as a means of purifying the liver does not prevent us from treating the Dogon institution as one example of a very widespread form of 'friendship' in which such exchange is a distinctive feature.

It is not a question of whether my theory, or any other general theory, of joking relationships is or is not satisfactory. It is the different question of whether such a general theory is possible, or whether attempts to arrive at one should be abandoned in favour of resting content with particularistic explanations.

The same question of methodology arises in connexion with the conclusion of M. Griaule's article. He touches briefly on the need for an explanation of the Dogon-Bozo alliance 'en tant que système de groupes couplés et dont les deux parties ont des prérogatives et devoirs complémentaires'. He finds the explanation in 'les fondements même de la métaphysique dogon. En effet, dès l'origine du monde, la règle était de gémellité. Les êtres devaient naître par couple.' This is therefore a particularistic explanation in terms of Dogon ideas about twins.

Relations of this kind between paired groups are to be found in many parts of the world. Outstanding examples are provided by the moiety organizations of North and South America, Melanesia, and Australia. The most usual way of representing this unity in duality, linking two groups into one society, is by pairs of opposites, such as Heaven and Earth, War and Peace, red and white, land and water, coyote and wild cat, eaglehawk and crow. The underlying conception is therefore that of the union of opposites, as in the philosophy of Heraclitus. It was highly elaborated by the Chinese in the philosophy of *Yin* and *Yang*; *yang* and *yin* are male and female, day and night, summer and winter, activity and passivity, &c., and the dictum is that *yang* and *yin* together are required to make a unity or harmony (*tao*) as in the union of husband and wife, or the union of winter and summer to make a year.

The Dogon are therefore unusual when they represent the relation between paired groups by reference to human twins. But this can be seen to be only a special development of a conception that is very widespread in Africa, by which twins are regarded as a single entity divided into two parts. A comparative study of African customs concerning twins shows this conception developed in a number of different ways.

In the Dogon cosmology as recorded by M. Griaule and his associates the most fundamental conception of unity in duality seems to be not that of twin births but rather the opposition of the masculine and feminine principles, just as in the *yin* and *yang* of China. Human beings are born endowed with both principles and it is by the operations of circumcision and clitorodectomy that they become truly male and female, so that there is again a Heraclitean union of opposites in the sexual union of husband and wife. One useful clue to the understanding of Dogon cosmological ideas, or certain of them, is the way in which this duality of male and female is combined with the duality in unity of twins. The latter form of duality corresponds to the number 2; the former to the opposition between 3, masculine symbol, and 4, feminine, which being added together give 7, the symbol of the complete being.

The symbolic representations of the Dogon present striking similarities to those found in other parts of the world besides West Africa. The basis of any scientific understanding of them must be just such a particularistic study as is being made by

M. Griaule and his co-workers; but it is suggested that it will need to be supplemented by a systematic comparative study extended as widely as possible. The conception of unity in duality has been used by man not only in the establishment of systems of cosmology but also in organizing social structures. A comparative study of this, as of joking relationships, may be expected to aid in most important ways the understanding of the Dogon system which, without it, would seem to be only a peculiar product of a particular people.

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*Résumé*

## PARENTÉ A PLAISANTERIE: UNE NOTE

L'AUTEUR, se référant à un article par M. Griaule dans un numéro antérieur d'*Africa*, discute des exemples, rapportés d'Australie, d'Océanie, de l'Amérique du Nord, et de diverses parties de l'Afrique, de relations que l'on appelle ordinairement 'parenté à plaisanterie', mais qu'il préfère appeler 'amitié'. En faisant usage de ce terme, il le distingue des expressions normales de solidarité et d'aide réciproque imposées par les liens de parenté ou par le fait d'être membres du même clan, et limite le terme aux relations liant des membres de deux groupes séparés qui sont reliés indirectement, en général par le mariage. Les relations en question sont souvent celles qui existent entre un homme et les frères et sœurs de sa femme, ou entre des enfants et leurs grands-parents, quoiqu'elles puissent s'étendre à tous les membres des deux groupes. C'est exactement l'opposé de la coutume d'éviter la mère et le père de l'épouse, mais le but est le même — assurer l'absence de conflit entre les deux groupes — dans un cas par le respect strictement imposé, dans l'autre par une licence de familiarité s'étendant aux insultes et au langage obscène. Prof. Radcliffe-Brown pose en thèse qu'une étude comparative de telles relations dans plusieurs régions et parmi plusieurs peuplades différentes permettrait une explication générale des règles conventionnelles de conduite dont le but est d'éviter le conflit dans certaines situations qui touchent à la structure familiale. Ces relations devraient évidemment être étudiées par rapport aux relations sociales sur un plan étendu. Il reconnaît que les relations entre les Dogon et les Bozo, décrites par M. Griaule, sont peut-être, sous certains aspects, uniques, mais il signale que cela ne diminue aucunement l'utilité d'une étude comparative de ces relations d' 'amitié'.



# SIR'AT 'ADKEME MILGA'—A NATIVE LAW CODE OF ERITREA

DENNIS J. DUNCANSON

THE Abyssinian farming communities of the three highland provinces of Eritrea (Ĥamasên, 'Akele Gûzay, and Serawê) may be said always to have had two agencies of government: on one hand, the institutions of village society, and, on the other hand, the central government of Ethiopia, known in Eritrea as the *mengiṣti* and comprising the military organization of the Solomonid monarch—the *Nigûṣe Negeṣt*—and the quasi-feudal establishments of his provincial governors and of the Coptic Church. To the latter of these agencies, in constitutional theory, there succeeded the Italian monarchy when the Eritrean Colony was proclaimed on 1 January 1890.<sup>1</sup> Even before that date the scope of the *mengiṣti* in Eritrean affairs had never been well defined, but had been modified or intensified as political conditions changed in the Empire generally. Thus when highland Eritrea was governed by a *Bahre Negasê*, before the Somali and Turkish invasions of the sixteenth century, the *Nigûṣ* and his nomadic Court were probably an appreciable factor in village government. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries scarcely any functions of imperial government can be traced in Eritrea, and the villages, in the words of the contemporary Abyssinologue Job Ludolf, 'Regi Habessinorum quidem parent, sed sibimet Rectores præficiunt, ac suis legibus in modum alicuius parvæ Reipublicæ utuntur.'<sup>2</sup> During the nineteenth century political authority—which may be summarized as power to exact tribute (the strict etymological implication of *mengiṣti*), to requisition and re-allocate land, and to beat the war-drum (*kitet*)—passed into the hands of *mesafinti*, chiefs of local peasant origin who claimed a dubious imperial sanction for the authority they had won by their arms. This phase culminated in the unsuccessful attempts of John IV (1870–89), himself a *mesfin* from the Tigray, partially to reorganize Eritrean village society on a feudal basis that would enable him to reassert the lapsing imperial authority. The only code of laws known in Ethiopia was the *Fitha Negeṣt*, or *Canons of the Kings*, culled from Scripture, from ancient canons of the Church, and from early Byzantine statutes by a Syrian compiler of the fifth century and translated into Ethiopic in the fifteenth.<sup>3</sup> The *Fitha Negeṣt* stood until the twentieth century as the basic law of the Empire beside the Law of Moses, and was no less inept in village affairs for being highly revered by the Abyssinians.

The customary laws—the *suae leges* of Ludolf—by which the humbler of the agencies of government regulated and still regulates village affairs in Eritrea are for the most part expressed in maxims, which, however, have for long been regarded almost as unwritten codes because tradition ascribes many of them to specific authorship. For instance, the laws of the Deqi Tefjim villages in Ĥamasên, some of which

<sup>1</sup> The terms *Eritrean* and *Ethiopian* here refer to the heterogeneous political territories of those names, *Abyssinian* to one people who live in the highlands of both territories.

<sup>2</sup> *Historia Æthiopica*, 1681.

<sup>3</sup> Edited by Ignazio Guidi, *Il Fetha Nagast*, Rome, 1897–9.

had in the past already been written down, are supposed to be the work of a chief who lived in the middle of the seventeenth century, Dejatf Habsilûs, and of his son Dejatf Gebrekristos. Tradition attributes the laws of the Wedekele villages in 'Akele Gûzay to the single legislative act of a body of elders who assembled for that purpose at an uncertain date at a place called Mên Mihaza. The largest of the ethnic groups in Serawê, the 'Adkeme Milga', likewise believe their laws were laid down once and for all by their two eponymous ancestors when they first settled in their present country, probably in the fourteenth century. Under the aegis of the Italian Government several monographs on customary law were composed by Europeans, and a few were published.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the Abyssinians themselves showed much interest in the exposition of their customary law, and there began to appear, beside the three principal systems already named, several rival and less well authenticated systems claimed as independent by smaller ethnic groups apprehensive of assimilation to their bigger neighbours: in 'Akele Gûzay the laws of the 'Igela; in Hamasên those of the 'Anseba, Lamza, and Karnefim; in Serawê those of the Logo Tjwa.<sup>2</sup> This interest has been kept alive by considerations to be outlined below, and since the British occupation of Eritrea three of the systems have been codified by their exponents and committed to writing: those of Mên Mihaza, Logo Tjwa, and 'Adkeme Milga'. Only the two latter have reached the press, and they have the distinction of being the first printed books published solely on native initiative in the Tigrîña vernacular.<sup>3</sup>

The decision to compile the *Sir'at 'Adkeme Milga'* (Laws of 'Adkeme and Milga'), which alone will be considered here, was made in 1942 by a group of chiefs and notables of Serawê, headed by the chief of the district of Tekela, in which is situated the provincial headquarters, 'Adi Wegri (otherwise Addi Ugri). Not only the *debterat*, or traditional custodians of customary law, but many other notables in the 'Adkeme Milga' districts were invited to co-operate. The reasons why it was deemed expedient at that time to reduce the customary law to a code are not far to seek. Rising population, the development of urban life since the Ethiopian war of 1935-6, and the inevitable association of Eritrean economy with the Italian military defeat in 1941 had to some extent dislocated village society everywhere in highland Eritrea. Traditional rules for the inheritance or allocation of village office and of agricultural land, intimately connected with each other in Abyssinian custom, were particularly in question; and disputes were growing more numerous and more insoluble because the customary law was not prescribed by generally accessible or acceptable authority. A secondary consideration no doubt lay in the self-consciousness of Abyssinian culture, vaguely anxious to assert itself against the encroachment of European ideas before its traditions were modified or lost. The compilers met during 1943 and

<sup>1</sup> For example, Prof. Carlo Conti Rossini, *Principi di diritto consuetudinario dell' Eritrea*, Rome, 1916; Ilario Capomazza, *Il diritto consuetudinario dell' Acchê-Guzai*, Asmara, 1937; and Ercole Petazzi, *L'Odierno diritto penale dello Hamasien*, Asmara, 1937.

<sup>2</sup> The comparative importance of these systems may be judged from the approximate populations of the districts in which they are followed:

Deqi Tefim 100,000; 'Akele Gûzay (including Mên Mihaza and 'Igela) 85,000; 'Adkeme Milga'

70,000; Logo Tjwa 40,000; 'Anseba 14,500; Karnefim 13,500; Lamza 13,000.

This is not a complete list of the systems of customary law in Eritrea, nor even of the so-called codes, but only of those followed in the three highland provinces.

<sup>3</sup> *Sir'at 'Adkeme Milga'*, Tipografia Eritrea Pietro Silla, Asmara, 1944, 1s. 50c. *Sir'at Logo Tjwa*, *ibid.*, 1946, not priced.



1944, but no other record of their deliberations is available than the text as it was finally established.

The printed volume is divided into two parts: the first contains the text of the code, and the second contains the popular maxims from which the code is built up. The advantage of this second part is that the maxims are known to everyone and are there to rebut any charge against the authenticity of the code. On the other hand, they are not related to specific sections of the code, some parts of which are unsupported by maxims while some of the maxims scarcely have any bearing on the matter of the code. The maxims occupy more than half the volume because they are printed in Tigrīña with an Italian translation. An Italian translation of the code itself was also prepared, but it has not been included in the volume. The text of the code is about 30,000 words long and is divided into 84 numbered chapters and 743 unnumbered clauses. Chapters 1-8 deal with family status and the reciprocal duties of the members; chapters 9-11 with the economic status of strangers without kindred in the village; chapters 12-29 with customs of landright; chapters 30-33 with debt; chapters 34-50 with marriage, emancipation, and divorce, and with widows and orphans; chapters 51-4 with inheritance; chapters 55-6 with rights and duties of the village church and of its officiants; chapters 57-63 with miscellaneous liabilities of villagers for hospitality and other communal service; chapters 64-71 with procedure in litigation; and chapters 72-84 with acts which correspond to criminal offences in European law. This grouping of the chapters is not marked in the code, but it serves to show that some thought has been given to systematic arrangement. It would be impossible here to describe the whole range of the material; instead comment will be limited to a few only of the outstanding problems of custom over which civil causes have most frequently arisen in recent years and for whose resolution the code is intended to provide appropriate norms.

### *Landright*

Perhaps the greater number of civil causes in Eritrea, and certainly all the graver ones, arise from landright. Many of the customs set out by the new code cover differences over agricultural activities which are not of sufficient importance to reach the stage of judicial complaint: such are the use of threshing-floors and straw stacks (§§ 15 and 19), the drawing of water from streams and wells (§ 16), the cutting of different qualities of timber for different purposes by persons of different standing in the village (§ 17), rights of way (§ 20), the swarming of bees (§ 21), and the use of meadows for haymaking and grazing (§ 18). Left out altogether from the code are customs relating to ownership, allocation, or use of building land within the village area—an omission hard to account for.

The right to absolute property in cultivable land is known everywhere in the Eritrean highlands as *risti* and the holder as *risteña* (plural *risteñatat*), and it is over participation in this right that the most acrimonious disputes occur. An important feature of *risti* is that it is transmitted by inheritance—the word is connected with the root *WRS*, to inherit—and consequently with it go the rights and privileges of the dominant lineages in the village community. Thus in some parts of 'Akele Gûzay and Hamasên the word seems to connote primarily, not a property right, but a social status, almost always superior, though exceptionally—as at 'Ad Teklesan—inferior

to that of other lineages dwelling in the village.<sup>1</sup> The chapter on *risti* (§ 12) is the longest in the code, and amongst other customs it deals fairly fully with a question of urgency everywhere in highland Eritrea: the inheritance of daughters and their sons—*deqi gual*, sons of a daughter, as opposed to *deqi wedi*, sons of a son. Patrilineal transmission of land is asserted in the proverb common to all Abyssinian communities in Eritrea: 'To the daughters their dowry, to the sons their *risti*.' In Hamasên, where land hunger is acute, this principle tends nowadays to be applied rigorously; in 'Akele Gûzay, where landright is associated less closely with lineage and more with neighbourhood, an option between patrilocal and matrilineal settlement of newly emancipated sons introduces numerous *deqi gual* amongst the *risteñatat* of some villages. But in Serawê, especially its more southerly 'Adkeme Milga' districts, slightly different marriage customs have in recent years focused the *deqi wedi* versus *deqi gual* dispute on the emancipation of married women from their own kindred and entry into their husband's. In the formal marriage pact (*qal kidan*), celebrated in church, the payment of a dowry by the bride's father to the bridegroom's father discharges the former's family from any further obligations towards the girl's children, whether or not—by agreement between the two fathers (§ 40)—the young couple are emancipated and given a new house and possession of the dowry during the lifetime of the bridegroom's father. But sometimes when the husband already has a *qal kidan* wife, and sometimes alternatively because their two families are poor, a couple may marry without dowry. In such a case there can be no ceremony in church, even if the marriage is not bigamous, for custom prevents the Church from giving its sanction to a union which lacks the secular sanction of a dowry and all the long-drawn-out ceremony that goes with it.<sup>2</sup> Either the wife may receive a stipend, *qutsar* or *demoz* (§ 38), or more commonly she may enter the union as her husband's equal, not as a member of his kindred, and share all property jointly with him (*birki*). In either circumstance the 'Adkeme Milga' code regards the woman as 'unmarried'—in the terms of the maxim quoted, she has no dowry—and her sons by the union, who are none the less legitimate, inherit *risti* from her father as well as from her husband's father. There are also other circumstances in which *deqi gual* may inherit: even in a *qal kidan* marriage, if there are no sons, then daughters, and through them their sons, may inherit a father's *risti* instead of their uncles, who would otherwise be heirs, provided that at the time of the father's death at least one of them was married—and presumably emancipated from their kindred by payment of a dowry, since that is the usual implication in the code of the term married. If the unmarried sisters accept the tutelage of the married ones after the father's death and marry the husbands these find for them, all share equally in the *risti*; but if the tutelage is repudiated—for instance, by contracting a *demoz* marriage—the married sisters inherit alone, or if it is not offered the unmarried ones inherit alone. In its effect this principle might well be viewed as the converse of the *birki* one. *Deqi gual* also share the inheritance with *deqi wedi* when their mother or their father has been called upon to give assistance in a successful land dispute, the former as compurgator

<sup>1</sup> The word *risti* defies simple translation because of the many and divergent customs associated with it in different communities. Perhaps the nearest English equivalent is *allod*, especially in the implied contrast with land occupied by tenure (*gulti*, plural

*'agûlat*) directly or indirectly from the *Nigûs*.

<sup>2</sup> It should be understood that these references are not, of course, as in other parts of Africa to mission churches, but to the Coptic Church and the numerically unimportant Catholic Church of Ethiopic Rite.



—a function to be explained below—or the latter as advocate. Most unexpected case of all, once *deqi gual* have established their right to share *risti* they must themselves then divide it with their sisters, whether these are emancipated or not. None of these provisions relate to movable property, which is subject to other rules (§ 54).

Two other aspects of landright are worthy of note. The first is the position of *werqeñatat*, persons whose right is derived from purchase (*werqi* meaning gold); the second is the testamentary disposal of land. The chapter on *werqi* lays down the procedure for ensuring that prior option on land for sale is offered to the owner's kindred, and it fixes the price, which is not allowed to vary, for the idea of a market in land would conflict with Abyssinian social concepts. After the sale the *werqeña* is liable to pay the *risteña* who sold the land a *gibri werqi*, or annual tribute of half a measure of grain for each acre, no doubt in order to conserve memory of the transaction (§ 13). Now unless the *werqeña* already enjoys the status of *risteña* by virtue of owning other land in the village, it must be his aim to acquire recognition as such; and cases where he has succeeded have come into the courts.<sup>1</sup> Although, like the court which decided the case quoted, the 'Adkeme Milga' code treats the *risteña-werqeña* relationship as permanent, in another place it makes a rule whose operation would soon tend to obliterate it: namely, that *werqi* land is inherited equally by sons and daughters, without qualification (§ 52). Thus it must be liable through fragmentation to lose its identity among other parcels held by the same person. The validity of wills is provided for in § 53, but although this chapter deals with attestation by priests and the subsequent procedure for proving the will, no guidance is given on the important question whether by will a *risteña* may alter the customary succession to his land, for instance, to benefit a daughter or an adopted son. In the new code an adopted son is specifically excluded from customary right to *risti*, being entitled only to the provision by his adoptive kindred of the material means to contract marriage (§ 42); but it is not clear whether an adoptive father has power to override the custom by making a will. According to an unpublished monograph on 'Adkeme Milga' customs composed by an early Italian administrative officer, daughters used to inherit by will.<sup>2</sup> But there is no such provision in the new code.<sup>3</sup>

### *Village and Church*

It is logical that we should not find any rules in the 'Adkeme Milga' code for the payment of tribute (*feses*), obedience to the war-drum, or the obligations attaching to the several land tenures comprised in the term *gulti*, for all these things, deriving ultimately from the *Nigûs*, are imposed by external authority and cannot be subject to village custom. For the same reason there can be no mention of the extensive 'agûlat of the monasteries or of the duties of the peasants towards them, for again the authority which has set them up and endowed them has always been the *Nigûs* or a *mesfin* in his stead. But these exemptions from village authority are not shared by the secular clergy of the churches, and their duties and endowments are fully provided for in § 55. The church edifice is the property of the villagers—more narrowly of

<sup>1</sup> e.g. 'Inda 'Aneniyas v. 'Inda 'Êfrêm, both of Kes'ad Da'ro ('Adi Wegri No. 26/45).

<sup>2</sup> A. Mulazzani, Residente del Mereb ('Adi Kualala), *Norme del diritto consuetudinario secondo il costume dell'*

*Atchemè Melegà*, 1898.

<sup>3</sup> For an exposition of Eritrean landright generally, see S. F. Nadel, 'Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau' in *Africa*, Jan. and Apr. 1946.

the *risteñatat*, we may guess—and their lineage names must be inscribed upon the *tabot*, the secret casket whose presence in the Holy of Holies sanctifies a Coptic church. 'The power to engage or dismiss priests, whether they be *risteñatat* or strangers, rests with the villagers'; the priests must 'serve the church according to instructions given by the villagers', and any who err by omission are liable to pay an indemnity to each villager individually. Since the income of the church and the stipends of the priests are derived in the main from endowments of village land (*rim*), the occupation and cultivation of the latter depend solely upon the wishes of the villagers. The priests' standing in the village is expressed in terms of land as is the standing of other villagers, and it is significant that they are appointed or dismissed on the first Sunday after Easter, the day on which the agricultural season opens and conveyances of land take effect. All these provisions reveal a decided opposition to encroachments into the realm of temporal authority by the heads of the Coptic Church in Eritrea, in some of whose acts may be discerned a desire throughout the plateau to subordinate all issues remotely connected with the Church, including those of land, to their own jurisdiction.

### *Rules of Procedure*

The village judge is the *daña*. For the higher jurisdictions of *gulteñatat* and *mesafinti*, or for appeals to the *Nigús* or the courts of the colonial government, the code again could make no rules. The *daña*'s jurisdiction is his village or his district. No special qualification is prescribed for him in the code—although the colonial government, having assumed the function of appointing him, may make such rules—and in fact any three villagers may be asked by litigants to arbitrate between them (§ 64). The *daña* must hold the hearing publicly in the village assembly place (*bayto*), and it is essential to his judgement that he should call upon the advice of a jury of at least two knowledgeable villagers, but preferably a higher even number, over whose opinions he holds a casting vote (§ 65). The debate proceeds by exchange of admissions until the *daña* elicits the grounds of disagreement (§ 68); from these he formulates a proposition of what has to be proved, which is a combination of plaint and judgement. The plaintiff, who normally alone has the right or obligation to adduce evidence—although a number of exceptions to this rule are specifically noted in other parts of the code—must now make a wager (*wirdi*) that he can prove the terms of the *daña*'s judgement, which he must accept as the substance of his plaint or lose his case by default (§ 67). The parties determine by bidding what amount they will wager on the proof being established (§ 64). The value of the wager is paid by the losing party to the *daña*, whose only other customary honoraria are a fee of 2 Maria Theresa thalers for each day's hearing and fines for contempt. The trial for the wager consists in the examination of witnesses, over whose admissibility and credibility subsidiary disputes often arise. In the code the rules are clearly stated: witnesses are admissible unless they are interested parties, related within five degrees to the party who calls them, or protagonists in a feud against the opposite party (§ 69). They are presumed to be credible unless they have been assembled after the *daña* announced the terms of his judgement, which amounts to suborning them; but in disputes over *risti* there must be seven witnesses, and at least four must testify unambiguously in favour of the party that calls them (§ 12). Trial by oath survives



in causes to which large ethnic groups are parties, for instance, over the relationship of lineages, over *risti*, and over *gulti* (§ 12). The terms of the oath will be the converse of those of the wager in trial by evidence, but the decision to continue the trial by oath instead of by evidence lies with the defendant, not with the *daña*, as also does the selection of the compurgators: they will be all the members of the plaintiff's kindred over twenty years of age, up to a maximum of seven men and seven women. The defendant may require that the oath be sworn in a particular church or in the open (§ 70). If any one of the compurgators fails to swear, his party loses its case (§ 12). Witnesses who are forsworn may never testify again (§ 69), but the code does not specify whether compurgators may similarly lose their oathworthiness. The success or failure of the trial by evidence or oath is the end of the case, and there can be no further argument, except that appeal can be made to a court beyond the scope of the code (§ 66).

### *Crimes*

Criminal offences are not unexpectedly treated in Abyssinian custom as civil causes. Fines (*dinkil*) are prescribed only for contempt of a *daña* (§ 66); all other offences are punished by compensation payable to the injured party (*kahsa*). The code makes one provision for civil liability to the Church for sin: that of adultery committed by a husband or wife married in church—possibly an isolated influence of the *Fitha Negešt*. The compensations are mostly calculated in *ferqi*, lengths of home-spun cotton cloth. The use of cloth as a currency in Eritrea is not modern: printed calicoes from Gujerat were used as currency in Red Sea ports during the later Middle Ages, and still are in Eritrean Dankalia. But in all systems of customary law except 'Adkeme Milga' compensations other than those arising from farming activities—usually payable in kind—have for long been calculated in Maria Theresa thalers, nowadays worth 2 shillings each. Fifty years ago the *ferqi* was worth 4 thalers in Serawê, but the new code puts it at 2.

It is this part of the code that treats of homicide (§ 75). Traditionally homicide, unqualified by any idea of degrees of culpability, had one of three outcomes: either feud, or the delivery of the culprit or one of his kindred to the victim's kindred for execution—at one time by stabbing, more recently by hanging—or the payment as compensation of a wer-geld or blood price (*gar nefsi*) between kindred and kindred, defined for purposes of marriage avoidance as relatives within seven generations (§ 2), but less precisely defined by custom in the present context. These last two may well be different aspects of the same procedure, but the new code can no longer make any provision for the execution of the culprit, which would not be tolerated under European government. The only rule prescribed by the code for the conduct of the feud, which in fact would only arise if the culprit fled from the neighbourhood, is that revenge must be achieved in the same fashion as the original killing; if the avenger fails to kill but only injures his man, he must pay him half the wer-geld. According to the code, the normal procedure after a homicide is for the culprit to surrender himself with rope and knife—which no doubt symbolize a choice between the two older methods of execution—to his victim's kindred; seven elders and the priests must then beg for forgiveness on his behalf; and when this is granted, a wer-geld of 250 *ferqi* and 250 thalers—which means 750 thalers altogether—is

collected by his kindred and paid half to the victim's heirs, half to the remaining kin. Apparently the authors of the code assume that the notoriety of the act will prevent the culprit from concealing his guilt, so there is no mention of the procedure encountered in the 'Akele Gûzay of forcing a suspect to clear himself by the oath of his kindred, nor indeed of any other method of detection. The wer-geld of 750 thalers is noteworthy as being the highest yet applied in Eritrea. A seventeenth-century account of the negotiation of wer-geld from the 'Adkeme Milga' area or near by, at a time when cattle were scarce, says that the sum of twelve head of cattle was arrived at after bargaining which opened with a demand for 100 and an offer of five.<sup>1</sup> Everywhere in the nineteenth century the figure seems to have been 120 thalers, which, though the equivalent of only 12 pounds sterling, would in many years buy as much as 6 metric tons of sorghum or 30 head of cattle. Mulazzani, in the monograph already quoted, also gives 120 thalers, but says that south of the Mereb in Tigray the figure had recently been doubled—doubtless because prices had already begun to rise. In recent years many Eritrean chiefs have tried to raise the amount so as to maintain its value in terms of commodities; but those who have to pay—amongst the Deqi Tefim for instance—say that 120 thalers is all that is sanctioned by custom, and in 'Akele Gûzay efforts to raise it to 800 have been defeated by the practical necessity of agreement with Muslims, who are bound by Shari'atic rules. The final provision in the code for settlement of a feud is the surrender of a girl by the culprit's kindred to that of the victim to form an alliance, unless the two belong to the same lineage, when the marriage is deemed superfluous.

The new 'Adkeme Milga' code undoubtedly has a conservative bias by comparison with the Logo Tfwa and 'Akele Gûzay codes: the Logo Tfwa code lacks even the oral tradition of the others, while the compilers of the 'Akele Gûzay code have set out to innovate by unifying all the customs followed within their province—Mên Mihaza, 'Igela, and even, where feasible, those of the Muslim Saho tribesmen living in community with Abyssinians—and by incorporating the modifications which inevitably take place in course of time. The aim to record 'Adkeme Milga' customary law in its traditional forms side by side with the traditional maxims has led to the inclusion of some obsolete rules: for instance, those relating to slavery (§ 7), a status that cannot be said to survive in Eritrea in any other form than Muslim concubinage, to which the code does not apply. It has been alleged by antagonists of the code that this conservative character is directed by the *risteñatat* class against other sections of the community, and such critics quote in support of their opinion the slavery clauses and those which pronounce it a slander untruthfully to call anyone a Muslim or a blacksmith or a musician (§ 73). A more serious charge might be that, in all the matter relating to land, there is no word prescribing the rights that *gebarat*, or tenants, may claim from *risteñatat*, than whom they are in some villages actually more numerous. No doubt the answer would be the not-unfounded one that traditionally the individual *gebar* must take what terms he can induce the individual *risteña* to offer,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. Jerónimo Lôbo, S.J., *A Voyage to Abyssinia* (1625-33), transl. Dr. Samuel Johnson, London, 1893, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> This principle was upheld by the European

courts in 1942 at the end of a series of disputes begun in 1912 between the 'Inda Gebrekristos of Bêt Gebri'êl and the 'Inda Ganzay of 'Adi Nala, one of the best-known cases in Eritrea.



while the same perhaps ungenerous tradition is responsible for the customs relating to slaves and slanders: there may well be reasons for changing all this, but such changes cannot honestly be recorded as part of the customary law of 'Adkeme Milga'—a consideration which also accounts for the disappearance from the revised 'Akele Gûzay code of the older title Mên Mîḥaza. Nevertheless, some of the clauses look very like innovations, for instance: 'Everyone is or should be free to profess his own religious beliefs' (§ 55), a tolerance which does not seem quite to accord with the provision that a Muslim who seduces a Christian girl must pay twice the compensation due from a Christian 'because he has contaminated the girl's Christianity' (§ 77), there being no parallel compensation for a Muslim girl seduced by a Christian. Still more definitely modern is the clause: 'Government orders must be observed scrupulously—anyone who fails to do so shall pay 60 thalers' (§ 71). But such apparent innovations are very few and scarcely detract from the character of the code as a genuine compilation of customary law. Particularly noteworthy is the absence of European influences, another quality distinguishing it from the Logo Tjwa code, which, for example, provides for compulsory attendance at government schools. The influence of European courts and legislation might have tempted the compilers—many of them well versed in the forms of both—to abstract theoretical principles from their customary law. But that has not been done, and what is not derived from maxims comes from remembered case law: the man injured by a flying axe-head (§ 75) or while milking a cow suddenly mounted by a bull (§ 80); and one can discern the kind of discussions over specific cases which must have preceded inclusion of such clauses as 'A third of the wer-geld does not have to be paid to the Government as a judicial fee' (ibid.).<sup>1</sup>

In the European courts of Eritrea the code has not the force of legislative enactment. Article 86 of the Italian *Judicial Ordinance* provides for the hearing of civil cases between Eritreans by customary law, but the means of ascertaining such law is left to the judge's discretion. Some customary law has been promulgated in government decrees, but only rules of procedure. The status of the code consequently will depend on its acceptability to public opinion, as expressed to the *daña* in the *bayto* or through court assessors and other *debterat* consulted by the judges. When it was first published petitions were addressed to the Government to express both approval and disapproval of it. But it is significant that those who disapproved did so on the grounds that what John IV is reputed to have scorned as 'rustic customs' and the accompanying maxims merit oblivion—not on grounds that the customs recorded are not authentic. The *Sir'at 'Adkeme Milga'* is in fact a vernacular publication that owes nothing at all to European influence exerted even indirectly through the education or specialized training of its authors.

<sup>1</sup> That the Italian Government once had some such rule is mentioned by Mulazzani, loc. cit.

## DUAL ORGANIZATION IN IBO SOCIAL STRUCTURE

G. I. JONES

THERE are many Abajas in the Ibo country; there were, until recently, two village groups of this name attached to a single Native Treasury. Its Native Authority officials were wont to distinguish them as Abaja-Isu and Abaja-Green. The former has now been transferred to Isu Native Authority, the latter is the subject of a recently published study by M. M. Green.<sup>1</sup> It forms the third-ranking village group of the Ehime 'clan' (tribe) which belongs to the eastern section of the Isuama division of the Southern Ibo. This section was classified by Talbot<sup>2</sup> as the Abaja 'sub-tribe' after its most important 'clan' (tribe)<sup>3</sup>, and within this 'sub-tribe' he distinguishes as the Abaja-Osu 'clan' (tribe) the two related 'clans' of Ehime and Ugboma. With so many Abajas to confuse the local issue the reviewer proposes to follow the Mbano Native Authority procedure and to refer to the community with whose affairs Miss Green is concerned as Abaja-Green.

We have had to wait more than two years for the publication of this tantalizingly brief account of Umueke Abaja, written eleven years after continued illness brought her field work there to an end. But it has been worth waiting for. The work is in four parts; the first gives a brief description of the religious and economic background, and a fuller and more detailed account of the social structure; the second deals with exogamy and its local implications; the third with women's associations; the fourth, inserted as an appendix is a very clear account of Dr. Murdo Mackenzie's theories on human temperament<sup>4</sup> and a rather hurried application of them to the Ibo material. The reviewer is not qualified to comment on Dr. Mackenzie's 'dual division' of mental drives into the opposing temperamental forces of

Immediacy/Deliberation

Amplification/Simplification

but Miss Green's conclusion that the normal Ibo temperament consists of a combination of immediacy and amplification does not seem very helpful, anyhow in distinguishing Ibo from Ibibio, Yoruba, or most other West Coast peoples with whom we are familiar. It takes no stock of the characteristically Ibo attitudes of extreme aggressiveness and enterprising individualism found in conjunction with an equally striking degree of tolerance and gregariousness, which enables these people to co-operate and live peacefully together in over-enlarged village communities in the most over-populated area of Negro Africa, and in spite of the fact that most of the people of any consequence in their communities live in a state of adjourned and undetermined conflict with each other. Most of these conflicts consist of relatively minor disputes between particular individuals and they cannot as a rule be resolved without the intervention of the rest of their group, an intervention the group is usually determined to avoid. Chapters vii and ix of *Ibo Village Affairs* do not, perhaps,

<sup>1</sup> M. M. Green, M.A., *Ibo Village Affairs; chiefly with reference to the village of Umueke Abaja*, London, Sidgwick and Jackson Ltd., 1948. Pp. 362, map. 10s. 6d.

<sup>2</sup> P. A. Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 1926. Vol. iv, map facing p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. Inyigugu, Nguru, and other village groups.

<sup>4</sup> M. Mackenzie, *The Human Mind*, 1940.



entirely succeed in elucidating the Abaja judicial system, because they take too little cognizance of the part played it by the Ehime Native Court; they do, however, bring out very clearly how much of the energies, the temperamental forces, involved in being an Ibo are expended in efforts to embroil other people in one's own quarrels and to avoid becoming involved in theirs.

Miss Green's description of the social organization, unless one is familiar with the Ibo provinces and their territorial nomenclature, is, in places, difficult to understand. Firstly, Ibo names can be very confusing, and the Colonial practice of calling administrative provinces and divisions after the village in whose territory their headquarters are situated has complicated the matter still further. Thus there is an Onitsha village group of the Northern Ibo which gives its name to a Province and also to a division of this Province. There is also an Owerri village or village group of the Southern Ibo which likewise gives its name to a Province and to a division of this Province. When Miss Green uses the name Onitsha, she is not referring to the neighbouring village group of Onitsha (Dim Neze), the senior village group of the Ugboma 'clan' (tribe), but usually to the Onitsha administrative division, and is contrasting Northern Ibo with Isuama customs. When she uses the word Owerri, outside of a dual divisional context, she is normally referring to the Owerri administrative division and usually to the Isuama part of it, that is, to roughly the same cultural area. In the second place the terminology she uses to define Ibo social groups follows that of Dr. Meek<sup>1</sup> which is based on the official usage. Unfortunately this has not found favour elsewhere, and most readers of *Africa* may be misled by it. The chief stumbling-block is the use of the word 'kindred' to define a unilateral descent group, or lineage, as defined by Professor Radcliffe-Brown. The term 'clan' is also used to define what normally passes in Africa for a tribe, while 'tribe' is reserved for a language group, for example, the Ibo-speaking people. In this review the terms used in defining village group structure will be, in descending order of magnitude: village group, primary division, village, village section, village subsection and compound, when referring to territorial or community groupings; while clan, subclan, maximal, major, minor, and minimal lineage, and family or household will be used when referring to descent groupings. These will, where necessary, be given in brackets after the 'official' term.

The characteristic Ibo social and political group is the enlarged village, or village group, as it is usually called. Its unity and cohesion has been greatly diminished through increase of population and, in recent years, by Colonial rule which has abrogated most of its political and judicial functions and conferred them on the central government and on local 'Native Administration' councils and courts. (Abaja-Green is part of the Mbano Native Authority and of the Ehime Native Court area.) In spite of all this the village groups remain significantly united, and recent political developments, local and African, not national or governmental, are tending to strengthen, unify, and expand their structure. However, for the ordinary affairs of everyday life the vital, the 'primary' group is that subdivision of the village group which government reports refer to as the kindred and Miss Green as the village; a local community which, amongst the Ehime tribe, contains between 200 and 600 persons. Sometimes this local community is small enough or coherent enough to

<sup>1</sup> C. K. Meek, *Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe*, 1937.

function as a single political unit, for example in the collection of its tax; in other cases it subdivides into sections which the reports usually call extended families and Miss Green, kindreds. These subdivide yet again into subsections, and these either into smaller subdivisions which Miss Green calls housegroups or directly into compounds, containing a single household consisting of a man, his wives, and dependants. Miss Green has devoted herself to a study of one of these villages—Umueke Abaja, and most of her contacts have been with the Ama section of it.

The most valuable part of her study, in the reviewer's opinion, is the examination of the distinctive features underlying Isuama social structure, particularly the system of division into equally balanced parts, to which she gives the name Dual Division, again following Meek,<sup>1</sup> who called it Dual Organization. With her customary diffidence she does not summarize her conclusions or propound any general description of the system, and it was outside her terms of reference to follow it up and see how it was applied in other Ibo villages. Had she been able to do this she would have seen more clearly that the essence of the system is not so much a division into two parts as a division into equally balanced parts, placed in opposition to each other. A similar type of division would appear to exist in the Tiv 'tribe', but nobody has yet worked it out. Both peoples conceive their social structure as an integrated pattern of descent groups, patrilineages, or *Umunna*, to use the Ibo term. The Abaja village group (or the Ehime tribe for that matter) is represented mythologically as the descendants of a common ancestor whose sons begat the secondary divisions (the villages) and whose grandsons or more remote descendants begat either the village sections or the village subsections. This makes Abaja a clan, (non-exogamous) and its villages maximal lineages. All alien or incorrectly related elements that become part of the group structure are fitted into this pattern by various fictions. Single persons become part of a particular household, families part of a minimal lineage and larger groups, whether freeborn or cult slaves (*osu*) become minor, major, or even maximal lineages, according to their size, with fictitious relationships to other groups of equal size. Now the difficulty with a structure based on a system of descent groups is that these groups develop unevenly, and that they almost invariably tend to split into an unduly large number of smaller segments, so that the original balance of the structure is lost. In Isuama society the equilibrium is maintained by its system of balanced or, as Miss Green calls it, dual division, which is based primarily on criteria of size rather than on those of descent. Under this system the community, that is, the village group in the first place, forms two or sometimes three groups, intermediate in size between the village group and the village, by arbitrarily grouping its component villages into two (or sometimes three) primary divisions of approximately equal size and weight; these are called Ama and Owerri in the Ehime Tribe, Eze (or Ikengga) and Ifite amongst the Northern Ibo (Onitsha and Awka administrative divisions). As they increase in size the process may be repeated within each village, the component subsections (major lineages) being grouped into two (Ama and Owerri) and sometimes three or four sections. Thus one normally finds four main segmentations in Isuama village group structure; a primary segmentation into two (sometimes three) parts, the primary divisions; a secondary segmentation of each of these into three or four villages; a tertiary segmentation of each of

<sup>1</sup> C. K. Meek, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-4.



these villages into two (or three) village sections; and a quarternary segmentation of each of these village sections into two or more village subsections. It would be tempting to regard the secondary and quaternary segments as essential parts of the lineage structure, and the primary and tertiary segments as arbitrary groupings combining the secondary or quaternary segments into equally balanced dual divisions. But it is not so easy as this. In the first place all of these segments, not only the primary and tertiary ones, are adjusted when necessary so that they achieve a rough balance. In the second place lineages themselves adopt this dual division to achieve a better balance within the lineage. Miss Green, though she refers to the division of an *umunna* (lineage) into two *umunne*, does not make it clear that this is merely an application of the dual division principle to the lineage, under the fiction that the lineage ancestor (*nna*) had two wives and his descendants form two subfamilies or sublineages (*umunne*), each descended from one of these mothers (*nne*). Thus it is quite impossible to distinguish between what are true lineages (*umunna*) and what are arbitrary divisions. Speaking generally when they are called Ama, Owerri, or similar names with no lineage association, they are probably arbitrary groupings.

This question of balancing is no mere anthropological abstraction, but a hard fact and subjected to what amounts to a means test, namely the Ibo system of sharing. With occasional exceptions in the case of senior lineages where religious and similar considerations demand their retention, each segment retains its position ('share') only so long as it can carry out the duties associated with segments of that grade or level. When it becomes unable to carry them out it drops to a lower level and an adjustment is made to restore the balance. Miss Green has produced an excellent example of how this process works in the case of Umueke Ama (pp. 16 and 17) which was unable to perform its functions as one of the dual divisions of Umueke; from being a village section and getting a half share (two quarter shares) the two minor lineages which formed the Ama section have become a village subsection which gets a single quarter share; the other quarter share now gets to a minor lineage transferred from the Owerri section. The Owerri section originally consisted of the entire major lineage of Umueruru, it now contains only two of its three subdivisions, the third now being contained in the Ama section.

Such adjustments do not of course involve any transfer of territory or change of domicile. They merely mean that the transferred group faces towards a new central meeting place and shares and works within the segment to which it has been transferred. In the Umueke example Umu Nwa Edodim turns away from the Owerri and joins itself to the Ama centre (see map on p. 260). The accompanying diagrams of Abaja-Green and Umuanakanu, another Ehime village group, will, it is hoped, illustrate this analysis and amplify Miss Green's work. They were obtained in 1940 by the writer in the course of his administrative duties, and with a few exceptions they have only been carried to the village level. Miss Green's data for Umueke have been added and further investigation would probably show similar divisions into two or four for most of the other Abaja villages. The figures represent tax-paying males and give a very rough idea of the adult male population. Those without brackets indicate the actual tax-paying unit. Where such tax-paying units are subsections one can assume a considerable degree of friction within the village. It will be seen from the Abaja diagram that Abaja originally divided into seven villages (or maximal

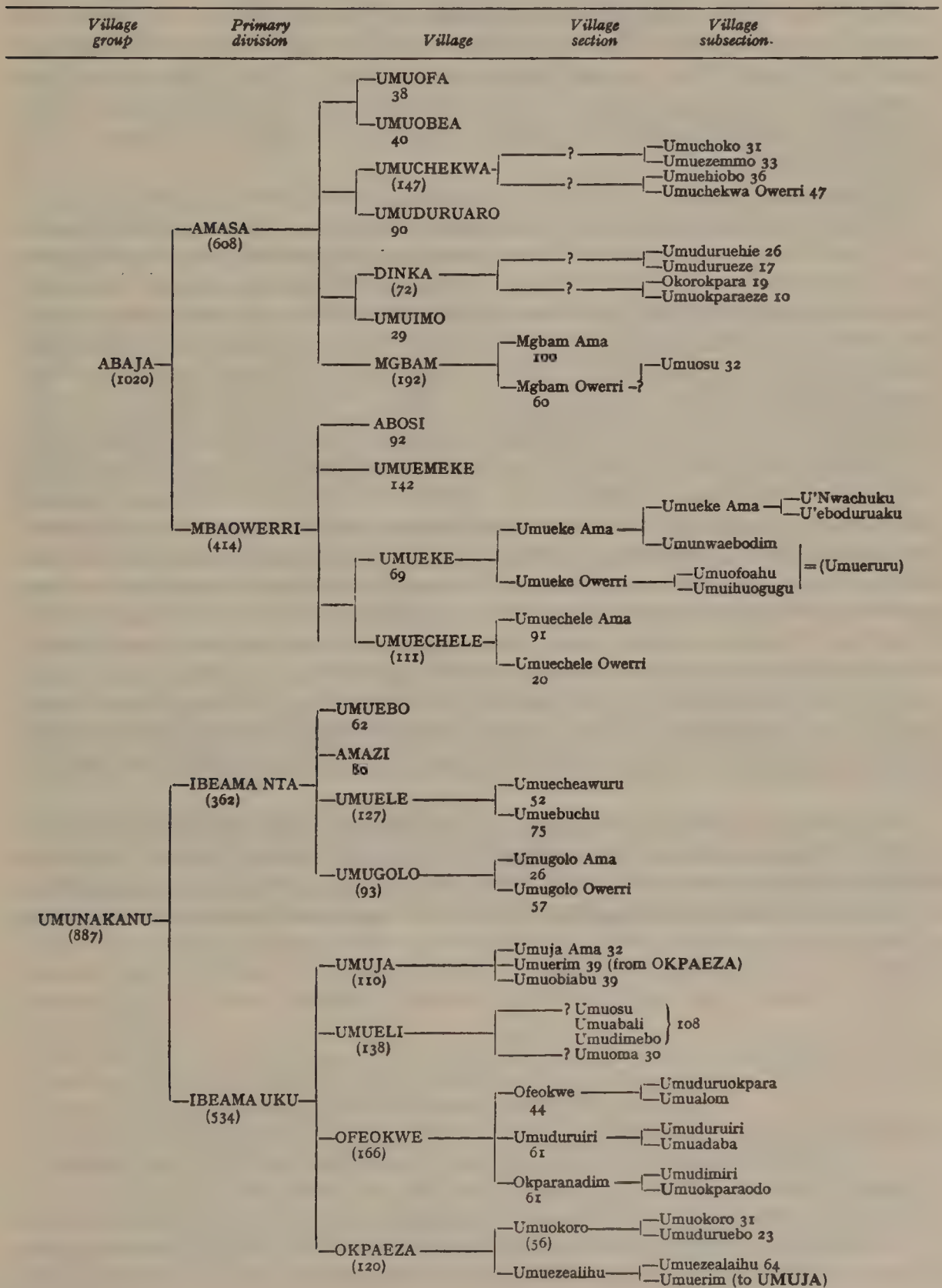
lineages or subclans) four of which were grouped into the Ama division, and three into the Owerri. Five of these maximal lineages divided, each into two *umunne*, so that the final number of villages became seven (*Aja*) in the Ama division, and four in the Owerri. The Umuosu subsection in Mgbam village probably represents an *umunna* formed of cult slaves who for some unexplained reason prefer to pay tax as a separate unit. It would be interesting to learn how the diminutive Umuimo village has managed to survive as a village, and whether this lack of balance between the different villages is not one of the main causes for the difficulties Miss Green describes on page 13 regarding the clearing of the village 'roads' to the central meeting place. The Umunakanu structure is a better balanced one than the Abaja and in its Ibeamauku division an interesting adjustment has been made between Umuja and Okpaeza villages. Here the subsection Umuerim of Okpaeza has been added to Umuja giving it a threefold division and leaving a better balanced dual division in Okpaeza.

How does exogamy affect the village structure? The answer is, that it does not, anyhow directly. As Meek has shown some village groups (e.g. Owerri) are exogamous units, most 'kindreds' (villages) are exogamous though some 'kindreds' divided into exogamous halves (e.g. in Umulolo Ama Imo), while in Abaja-Green most of the villages ('kindreds') form pairs of *umunne* of a larger exogamous maximal lineage or subclan. Miss Green's opinion is that the main function of exogamy in Ibo society is to break down any tendency towards village isolation by providing continuous contacts with other villages. Such contacts link together the local communities in any given region in an inextricable mesh of kinship associations, kinship being used this time in a bilateral sense. A second function which she touches on but does not follow up is that it provides an individual, particularly a male who otherwise would be forced to live and die in the same locality and as a member of the same lineage, with alternative communities to which he can attach himself should he become maladjusted to his own. He can, for example, go and live with his mother's people or with his father's mother's people, or even with his mother's mother's people, and eventually become absorbed into one or other of these lineages.

The section on women's associations is very interesting, particularly Chapter xvi, 'Groups based on place of Birth'. This provides an excellent instance of the vitality of Ibo society and its ability to assimilate types of European social groupings and to use them to supplement deficiencies in its own system. The 'Meeting', a type of association derived from the English friendly society or club, has been adapted in two ways: as a type of saving society, usually called an Isusu club and open to those men and women who can afford its weekly or monthly contributions; and as an 'Old Girls' club, bringing together all the women of a village (maximal lineage) who, owing to the rules of exogamy, are married and live outside the village. This second type of association closely parallels a similar development on the part of the men, who have 'meetings', now commonly called Family or Patriotic Unions, formed of those members, usually male, of a village group living and working in centres of employment outside their home villages. The unions follow the English pattern even more closely, with officers (president, secretary, treasurer, auditor, &c.) and codes of rules, but, as in the women's meetings, the motive power remains the primary Ibo one of blood and soil. The effect of these unions on those village groups that



## DIAGRAM OF ABAJA AND UMUNAKANU VILLAGE GROUP STRUCTURE



have formed them, which include Abaja-Isu but not as yet Abaja-Green, is to unite almost all the members of the village group, at home and abroad, bringing them together in a wider social and political structure that transcends local territorial boundaries and extends to all parts of West Africa where members of the village have found employment. The women's meetings described by Miss Green do not have to range so far afield and are thus on a more parochial and village, rather than village group basis, but they perform the same functions for the village as the mens' do for the village group.

The statement on page 23 that *Osu* (cult slaves) do not occur in Onitsha is incorrect; I think Onitsha is a misprint for Umuahia. *Osus* are not found on the Umuahia side of the Ibo river, nor as far as I know amongst the Cross River or North Eastern Ibo. The reference on page 98 to neighbouring people having recourse for judicial purposes to a poison ordeal, while Ibos are content with taking an oath, is misleading. The only people who submit to such an ordeal (drinking *esere* or *sass* wood) are those accused of being witches. The Isuama Ibo say they have no such witches and therefore have no need for such a poison ordeal. There was, however, a very flourishing poison oracle used for judicial purposes in the W. Isuama village group of, I think, Orodo which worked through poison administered to chickens. Again, the statement that the Ibo appeal to the supernatural rested solely upon taking an oath is not quite exact. This was the normal method, but there were the more powerful 'Agbara Jujus', prohibited as such in the Nigerian Criminal Code, which liquidated the losing party without any delay. The most notorious of these was the Long Juju of Aro-Chuku, but there were others, at Awka (N. Ibo) and at Ozuzu (S. Ibo). This type of judicial Agbara, however, is no longer functioning, anyhow officially.

Apart from the attribution of *African Political Systems* to Forbes and Crane-Pritchard in a footnote on page 61, there are no obvious misprints and the publishers are to be congratulated on their omission of those plates, of little artistic and less anthropological value, which most works on African anthropology seem fated to carry.

Miss Green has written a very useful, stimulating, and readable book and it is to be hoped that the pressure of her linguistic duties will relax sufficiently for her to follow it up with a further and more detailed study in which she will be able to develop the many ideas and suggestions that she throws out in each chapter of *Ibo Village Affairs*.



## Notes and News

### *Institute for Scientific Research in Central Africa*

I.R.S.A.C. (Institut pour la Recherche Scientifique en Afrique Centrale), established on 1 July 1947 at Leopoldville, is a semi-official institution, sponsored by the Government but directed by a Board of twenty-five Councillors. At the beginning of 1948, the new Institute was endowed with 200 million Belgian francs to be used for the erection of buildings and another 200 million to be kept in government bonds. This initial endowment will be supplemented by annual subsidies of 25 million francs.

I.R.S.A.C. is concerned with fundamental study of the tropical environment, human, zoological, and botanical, for which the Belgian Congo, with its wide variety of climate and altitudes and its exceptionally well-developed road system, offers unusually favourable conditions. Its aim is to co-ordinate and assist the various scientific institutions and services operating in the Congo, and in furtherance of this aim, it will offer fellowships and grants to scientists established in the Congo. It will also maintain its own scientific and technical staff and will act as an information centre for visiting scientists, for whom it will provide material assistance, research and travel facilities and space for study in its different centres.

Several research centres will be established in the Congo during the next two years. The main one will probably be on the high plateau between Lake Kivu and Lake Tanganyika, south of Costermansville, where a team is now in the field, searching for a suitable site for a high-altitude astronomical Observatory. This main centre will house a laboratory of vulcanology, seismology, and ionospheric measurements, a department of experimental biology, and a library. Early this year a research centre devoted to hydrobiological studies will be opened at Uvira, on the northern shore of Lake Tanganyika. Another centre for researches on physical and social anthropology will be started before the end of the year at Astrida in Ruanda, east of the Congo. A fourth centre will be established in the Province of Equator, in the low central Forest, and will be devoted to studies on climatology, hydrobiology, anthropology, nutrition, botany, &c.

The Board of Councillors, under the chairmanship of Professor E. De Bruyne, of the University of Ghent, formerly Minister of Colonies in the Belgian Government, is composed of representatives of all branches of science. Most of them are distinguished Belgian scientists, but three are foreigners: Dr. E. B. Worthington, Scientific Adviser to the High Commissioner for East Africa in Nairobi and a distinguished hydrobiologist; Dr. Harlow Shapley, Director of the Harvard College Observatory; Mr. A. Chevalier, Professor at the Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris and a botanist of world-wide reputation.

The Director of I.R.S.A.C., Dr. Louis van den Berghe, M.D., Sc.D., Professor at the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp and visiting Professor at the Tulane University of Louisiana, is already established at Costermansville, B.P. 217.

Mr. J. P. Harroy, former Secretary of the Institut des Parcs Nationaux du Congo Belge, is Secretary General of the Administrative services in Brussels, 42 rue Montoyer.

No journal will be maintained by I.R.S.A.C., but a report on general subjects, including abstracts of the papers published elsewhere by the members and guests of I.R.S.A.C., will appear annually and will be distributed widely among scientific institutions; a report on the activities of the Institute during the year 1948 will be available by the middle of 1949.

*Institut d'Études Centrafricaines*

LA Section de Sociologie et Ethnologie créée à l'Institut d'Études Centrafricaines vient de reprendre ses activités; il entre dans ses projets de travail immédiats:

1. L'établissement des cartes ethniques et démographiques lié à la réalisation d'un Répertoire des Populations;
2. L'étude des problèmes urgents qui se posent en Afrique Équatoriale Française:
  - (a) démographie et problèmes de la dépopulation,
  - (b) évolution de la famille,
  - (c) rupture de l'organisation sociale traditionnelle et tentatives de réorganisation,
  - (d) l'alimentation indigène,
  - (e) les centres extra-coutumiers,
  - (f) réalisation de tests psychologiques et psychotechniques dans les divers milieux scolaires et les établissements d'enseignement professionnel.

De telles préoccupations permettront d'orienter les Sciences Humaines dans un sens immédiatement utile au développement économique et social; elles permettront de réaliser le pont entre les sociologues ou ethnologues et les administrateurs coloniaux.

Dans l'immédiat, M. G. Balandier, accompagné de M. Sautter, spécialiste de la géographie humaine coloniale, doit réaliser une mission en Pays Fang (Gabon, Cameroun, Guinée Espagnole) à la demande de M. le Haut-Commissaire en Afrique Équatoriale Française. Cette mission étudiera, notamment:

1. aire de répartition et démographie des Fangs;
2. vie économique du Pays Fang;
3. la structure sociale et les tentatives de regroupement des tribus et des villages.

(Communicated by G. BALANDIER.)

*Les Semaines Sociales de France (Lyon, juillet 1948)*

LA Semaine Sociale n'est pas un congrès, mais un ensemble de leçons magistrales, confiées aux plus éminents spécialistes des sujets traités chaque année, dans un esprit de loyale collaboration avec les pouvoirs établis, en toute indépendance pourtant en ce qui concerne la critique et le réforme des lois et des institutions.

A deux reprises déjà, en 1930 à Marseille, et à Versailles en 1936, la Semaine avait étudié le problème social aux colonies et les conflits de civilisation. Le thème inscrit à son programme en cette année 1948 était: Les peuples d'outre-mer et la civilisation occidentale.

Plus de deux mille Semainiers — clercs et laïques, européens et autochtones, évêques, missionnaires, parlementaires, professeurs, écrivains — étaient présents; quatorze nations étrangères, dont les U.S.A., la Grande-Bretagne, la Belgique, la Hollande, l'Italie, avaient envoyé des délégués. L'Afrique du Nord, l'A.O.F., et l'A.E.F., le Togo spécialement, comptaient un nombre imposant d'auditeurs.

M. Ch. Flory, Président de la Semaine, Conseiller de la République, directeur du personnel à la Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas, s'attacha à éclairer les conditions nouvelles des rapports de l'Occident et des peuples d'outre-mer. MM. les Professeurs Montagne, Lacombe et Letourneau ont exposé ensuite certains aspects des contacts Orient-Occident et la crise de jeunesse qui en résulte, notamment aux Indes et en Égypte. M. Alioune Diop, Conseiller de la République, a confronté les psychologies du Blanc et du Noir. Le Docteur Aujoulat, Député du Cameroun, a traité le problème des élites et de l'éducation des masses.

Le Gouverneur Général Delavignette, Directeur des Affaires Politiques au Ministère de la France d'Outre-Mer, évoqua les problèmes du travail. L'Afrique, tout en sauvegardant sa vie agricole, a besoin de la science et de ses applications industrielles. Elles doivent même servir la terre, qui s'épuise. La collaboration internationale, qui s'esquisse, offrira à l'Afrique



des perspectives de travail améliorées. La Semaine se termine par les exposés sur le développement économique des pays d'outre-mer, et sur les cadres sociaux et l'évolution familiale.

La Semaine Sociale de 1949 se tiendra à Lille du 18 au 23 juillet, et elle aura pour sujet 'Réalisme économique et progrès social'.

### *African Studies in Northwestern University, Illinois, U.S.A.*

THE African research programme, carried on for more than a decade by the Department of Anthropology, Northwestern University, is to be expanded and intensified in the next three years through a programme made possible by a grant of \$30,000 from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The programme will be directed towards an understanding of all aspects of contemporary African culture, with particular reference to the changes in native life resulting from the increasing influences of outside forces upon the African.

The training of research personnel for the African area will be a primary objective. Students will be prepared for field study and aided in working up field material, in special seminars to be set up under the leadership of Professor M. J. Herskovits and Dr. W. R. Bascom. The extensive collections of anthropological Africana in Deering Library will be broadened by the acquisition of works dealing with other aspects of the African scene, especially periodicals and government reports. A faculty and advanced graduate inter-departmental seminar will be instituted to provide for an integrated attack on the problems, both scientific and practical, of present-day Africa. It is planned to invite Africanists working in anthropology, economics, education, geography, missions, politics, and public health to discuss before the seminar the aspects of African life falling in their special fields, with the aim of providing Africanist work in other schools and departments of the University.

As an initial step in furthering this programme of African studies, Dr. S. F. Nadel, Reader in Anthropology, King's College, Durham University, England, will lecture at the University during the summer of 1949 on Africanist and related fields.

(Communicated by M. J. HERSKOVITS.)

### *Committee on Geographical Names (Nairobi)*

THE committee, summoned by the Government of Kenya, and presided over by the Director of Surveys, held its first meeting in Nairobi in November 1948. Mr. Thornley, member for Education, indicated the Government's policy with regard to the difficult question of place-names, to which much thought and discussion had already been devoted by a number of scientific societies. He said that the Government wished the committee to accept two principles which had been adopted in the survey of India, i.e. (1) To adopt all true native-born names. (2) To avoid inventing fictitious native names.

In the course of its discussions, the committee dealt at some length with questions of orthography, methods for reproducing the usual native pronunciation of place-names, and the disadvantages of using diacritical marks in the printing of place-names on maps. A resolution was passed approving the use of the customary English spelling for names derived from the English and of the alphabet used for the orthography of Swahili in the case of names derived from the vernaculars used in the country; and recommending that for record purposes and publication in a Gazetteer, the more accurate phonetic pronunciation of the name should be recorded in the alphabet set forth in the document *Practical Orthography of African Languages*. (Readers are referred to other discussions of this matter, *Africa*, xviii. 1, pp. 51-2 and 4, pp. 305-6.)

*Publications Bureau for Central Africa*

A GRANT has been made from the Colonial Development and Welfare Central African Allocation for the establishment of a joint Publications Bureau to serve Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The new Bureau will act as agent for the production and distribution of school text-books, and books required by the Agricultural, Medical, and other departments, in addition to producing books of more general interest. The production of literature in vernacular languages will be encouraged by competitions, editorial assistance, and the selection of works suitable for translation; the Bureau, while making use of existing publishing and bookselling agencies, will concern itself with arrangements for printing suitable manuscripts, and with the marketing and advertising of publications, and will furnish advice and information to libraries. The proposed Bureau is expected to be of particular value in the work of mass literacy now going on at Ndola and elsewhere. (Other literature bureaux are already active in Northern Nigeria and East Africa.)

*Exhibition of African Art in London*

AN exhibition of exceptional and peculiar interest is that of works of art by the pupils of Cyrene school, Southern Rhodesia. The school is a central primary boarding-school for African boys, government-aided but founded and directed by the Anglican Church. The pupils include boys from the Matabele, Mashona, Barozur, and Makalanga tribes of Southern Rhodesia, from Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia, and Bechuanaland. Their ages range from 10 to 20 years. The literary education extends from standard iii to standard vi, but the main emphasis is on crafts—carpentry, wood-work, painting—and courses in building and agriculture form an important part of the syllabus. Every pupil practises an art, though it is claimed that no direct teaching of art is given. The present exhibition consists of drawings in pen and ink, water-colour, and poster colours, carved wood reliefs, statuettes, and carved and decorated wood bowls. The qualities which mainly strike the visitor to the exhibition are the exceptionally delicate and restrained colour, the strong sense of composition and design, and the careful representation of detail which gives the pictures a tapestry-like quality. The way in which the spaces are filled and the material arranged to form a harmonious but in no way formal design is very striking. The pictures also suggest very strongly an extreme sensitivity to and love for the natural environment—the hills, trees, birds, and beasts—and a delight in careful craftsmanship. A certain uniformity in technique and arrangement suggests the influence—probably unconscious—of the teacher. It is to be hoped that some of these young artists will develop a more individual interpretation and technique.

*Abstracts of Current Literature*

A REFERENCE was made in an earlier number of this Journal (xviii. 4, p. 241) to the possibility of the Institute's undertaking the systematic publication of abstracts of current literature on different aspects of African studies. A proposal to establish an abstracting service was included in the memorandum submitted to U.N.E.S.C.O. last autumn (*Africa*, xviii. 4, p. 308) and the Institute has now received a grant to finance the initial organization and production of a quarterly review devoted to abstracts of current periodical literature in the fields of African anthropology, linguistics, social development, and related topics. Scientific journals of all countries will be covered, and material published during the war years will be included. Details of scope and organization are now being discussed, and full particulars of the new review, the date of issue, and the price and conditions of sale to members of the Institute and to the general public will be announced in the near future. Those who wish copies to be reserved for them are invited to communicate with the Institute.



## Reviews of Books

*Zulu Battle Piece. Isandlwana.* By SIR REGINALD COUPLAND. 1948. London: Collins. Pp. 144. Maps, plates. 7s. 6d.

SIR REGINALD COUPLAND has taken a holiday to give a succinct and readable account of the Zulu victory in the first battle of the Zulu War of 1879–80. His main interest is in the battle itself, and the two flanking chapters on its Prelude and its Sequel do not pretend to be full analyses of events. Nevertheless, he brings out clearly the inevitability of the war, despite the desire of the British Government in London and the Zulu King Cetshwayo, to avoid it. Altogether, we have here a valuable commentary on a still obscure period of South African history. It whetted my appetite, as a student of Zulu history, and I wish that Sir Reginald had worked up all the sources completely and assessed more fully the judgements on events of the various protagonists. This, I know, is asking for something he did not aim to give.

Two points are worth noting. I think there is evidence, in official and other documents, that the needs of the Natal colonists for African labourers contributed to the attack on the Zulu, though Sir Reginald does not mention this. Incidentally, he writes of many Zulu being employed in Natal, but the mass were Natal Nguni, not true Zulu of the Zulu kingdom. Second, Sir Reginald shows that the heroic defence of Rorke's Drift, which retrieved the disaster at Isandlwana, was maintained against only a small portion of the Zulu army, and he emphasizes the point that Cetshwayo's orders to his men were to defend Zululand, and not invade Natal. Zulu traditions confirm Miss Colenso's statement that only three regiments were involved, and add that they were disgruntled because they did not take part in the Isandlwana battle. According to these traditions, the Zulu thought this would be the only day's fighting of the war, for they held that Cetshwayo had challenged the British to one battle, as to a duel. They claim that the subsequent British invasion was not a gentlemanly action, and point out that if they had not abided by their challenge they could have done considerable destruction in Natal. This information is of uncertain value, but it is to some extent confirmed by the behaviour of Cetshwayo's brother, Hamu. He, representing their father King Mpande, alone of the council is said to have told Cetshwayo that he might think he was going to fight one battle, but would the British agree? The other chiefs and princes called him contemptuously a coward, and made him doff his prepuce cover. Therefore later he became a renegade. This tradition was not available to Sir Reginald, but I feel I must publish it in a review of his account, the first popular one which we have.

I hope that Sir Reginald's interest in the battle of Isandlwana will spur him to a fuller study of the events leading to the Zulu War, of the subsequent civil wars, and of the final establishment of British rule over Zululand.

MAX GLUCKMAN

*The Anchau Rural Development and Settlement Scheme.* By T. A. M. NASH, O.B.E., D.Sc. 1948. H.M.S.O., for the Colonial Office. Pp. iv+22. 3s. 6d.

IN 1936 the Sleeping Sickness Service of the Nigerian Government began to tackle the problem of sleeping sickness in the Zaria Province by introducing a scheme for resettlement and rural development in the Anchau district, where the infestation was estimated at the very high figure of one in three of the total population. This rather belated report gives an all-too-brief account of the scheme from the time it got under way in 1938 up to 31 March 1945 when the report was written. During this period the population of five Administrative districts totalling 60,000 has been concentrated in a fly-free corridor of 712 sq. miles (p. 5).

This gives a density of about 70 to the sq. mile, which is considered adequate for keeping down the thick vegetation along streams and rivers which harbour *Glossina Tachinoides* and *G. Palpalis*, the local carriers of sleeping sickness. The country on either side of the corridor has been left uninhabited to become forest reserves which, by reason of the absence of human contacts, will reduce the chances of the fly which remain there becoming infected with human trypanosomiasis. All this has entailed the removal and resettlement of about 5,000 people, the building of a new town and sixteen new villages, and the slum clearance and replanning of four old towns, in particular the town of Anchau, where originally 2,500 people lived within an area of 0.118 sq. mile giving a density of 21,200 to the sq. mile. This process of resettlement, slum clearance, and anti-tsetse measures was accompanied by the introduction of improved hygiene (wells and pit latrines) and by agricultural development—animal husbandry (most successful with pig-breeding), the introduction of citrus and shade trees (18,500 of them), of cash crops that could be fitted satisfactorily into the farming routine (tobacco), and of processing machinery (twenty sugar-cane crushers). Great care was taken in preliminary research before planning any concentrations or transfers—surveying, census work, hydrographic and vegetation surveys, including intensive and original work on plants as indicators of soil conditions, and the study of the agricultural economy of five villages. The latter showed conclusively that the farmers in the Anchau area required a far greater acreage of land than was previously estimated. The average acreage under cultivation per household of seven was fifteen acres, or two acres per head of population. Unfortunately, as this is not a technical report, very little of this information has been included. Nor does the report do justice to what is, thanks to the energy and resourcefulness of Dr. Nash and his colleagues, the largest and most successful experiment in resettlement and rural betterment in Nigeria, if not in British West Africa, which will in many respects serve as a model for similar projects elsewhere. Apart from a moving purple passage describing old Anchau, the report is more suitable for secretariat files than for the general reader. Only those who are thoroughly cognisant of the administrative structure of the Northern Provinces will, for example, be able to elucidate the following passage: 'The corridor runs through Eastern Makarfi, Ikara, Anchau, Kudara and Southern Tudun Wada districts, thus we have five separate district heads and Native Administrations to deal with and two Emirates' (p. 6). The social anthropologist will probably feel that the author ignores the social structure and is unduly concerned with the excretory functions of the local peasants and their livestock, e.g.: 'Continuous propaganda should make him more manure-minded. As will have been observed our policy has been to increase the amount of manure by every possible method on the principle that every little helps' (p. 8). These methods include 'pit latrines on a battery system', an anti-rinderpest inoculation camp to attract the wandering Fulani and their cattle, the fattening of livestock for slaughter, the bedding of draft animals ('one donkey can produce from 1 to 10 tons per annum') and the formation of household refuse heaps ('Mr. S. D. Ross has found that a family of four adults and four juveniles can produce nearly two tons of compost a year from household refuse'). It is possibly these preoccupations that have caused the author to take a rather jaded view of the remarkably docile inhabitants of the area. 'The Hausa peasant is an inscrutable person. In an attempt not to be moved he may claim that every site is hopeless, or he may say that everywhere is excellent because he wants to be polite' (p. 9), or again: 'PIGEON PEA. Despite endless propaganda this species is a failure. The native is too lazy to pick it and does not like it' (p. 15). On the technical side, the report supplies many very interesting details, but in a manner that makes them valueless for comparative purposes. On page 9 Mr. F. Jones is reported as having calculated that the average daily consumption of water per head is five gallons, but we are not told how these five gallons are consumed. Mr. Buxton's 'singularly instructive map' reproduced in Fig. 3 plots all the portions of land farmed by



the various householders of Gata village, detailing the crops grown on each. But he does not date his map or make it clear whether he is showing one or two years' crops. Moreover, the map lacks any accompanying table giving details of the farmers whose names appear on the various plots, or of their households, and the acreage they have planted. Statistics in tabular form are conspicuously absent and those which are given in the text could well be amplified. The only figure for costs that we are given is '£85,000 on all works' up to 31 March 1945. This says nothing of the personal emoluments of the Staff or other expenditure from Nigerian Sleeping Sickness departmental votes, and refers presumably merely to the Colonial Development Grant. The report gives us a brief and bald account of the Anchau Rural Development Scheme and as such supplies a long-felt want. It is a pity, however, that it could not have been amplified so that more of the original economic and ecological data obtained by Dr. Nash and his colleagues could have been made available for other workers. The report carries 16 before-and-after plates, 4 maps, 6 plans of model villages, wells, market-sheds, and slaughter-slabs, and one plan of Old Anchau in which, alas, all the dwelling-area is blocked out in solid black, with no distinction between the individual compounds or wards.

G. I. JONES

*Dominer pour servir.* Par PIERRE RYCKMANS, Gouverneur Général honoraire du Congo Belge. Nouvelle édition, 1948. Bruxelles: l'Édition Universelle. Pp. 189. 75 frs. belges.

*Dominer pour servir* was first published under this title in 1931. When a new edition was considered, several chapters were felt to be out of date and were omitted. Of the original collection there remain four essays on Urundi: one on witchcraft, one on the difficulties of applying European justice, one on family life, and one on religious concepts. These were originally addresses, delivered on various occasions between 1925 and 1930, and are written in an easy, conversational style, enlivened by anecdotes. Two further addresses, dating from 1932 and 1934, have been added, both attacking popular misconceptions about the intelligence, industry, and character of the inhabitants of the Belgian Congo. This collection of separate lectures is unified by an underlying aim—to present the Congo to the Belgian public in a sane and sympathetic light.

To the reader who is not under the illusions which the lectures were intended to dispel, the most interesting part of the book is the essay on the colonies in contemporary international politics, written in January 1948. This contains an able analysis of the situation of so-called 'colonial powers' in the Assembly of the United Nations. Of the fifty-seven member nations, only four have great colonial empires: Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Five others administer dependent territories: the United States, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and Denmark. The remaining forty-eight members have no colonial responsibilities, but many anti-colonial prejudices, born of their own widely differing histories of emancipation.

In the debate between the minority of colonial powers and the majority of anti-colonial states, the former accept the principle of international law that the relation between the metropolitan country and its colonies is a part of internal domestic policy, while the latter strive to bring all colonies under international control. M. Ryckmans analyses with some irony the conditions under which the debate takes place: the search for an equivocation which may enable each side to retain the substance of its claim, while renouncing a particular formulation; the advantage which lies with the side which takes the offensive; the gradual widening of the first concessions made by the colonial powers. He is at considerable pains to show that the isolation of certain problems labelled 'colonial' is artificial and arbitrary. Nearly all the countries ranged against the colonial powers have themselves dependent backward populations within their boundaries.

The effect of this distinction between dependent populations for which the United Nations

Organization is solicitous, and others in which it is not interested, quite apart from depriving the latter of protection which they may need, aggravates the misunderstanding between the colonial powers and the majority of the Assembly. For one thing, it weakens the sense of responsibility of the non-colonial powers, allowing them to stand immune from their own criticisms. For another, it delays understanding, by forbidding the type of comparison which should throw light on colonial problems.

These questions are submitted to a penetrating analysis, but the essay does not stop at rebutting ill-conceived criticisms of colonial policy. The last section contains criticisms of and suggestions for Belgian policy in the Congo.

M. M. TEW

*Guder og Fedre*. By JØRGEN RUUD. 1947. Oslo: H. Aschehoug & Co. (W. Nygaard). Pp. 178. Norw. Cr. 9,00 and 11,50.

DRAWING on eleven years' experience in the Tanala-Betsimisaraka border region of west-central Madagascar, Pastor Jørgen Ruud, of the Norwegian Mission at Masinandrana, presents in *Guder og Fedre* (*Gods and Ancestors*) a brief, admirable description of a culture about which all too little of real significance has been written.

Pastor Ruud is admittedly an amateur in the field of ethnography; his avowed intention in this work is 'to inspire anthropologists to a further study of this rewarding area'. His very modesty forestalls really serious criticism of his exposition from the point of view of anthropology; he has, indeed, presented a wealth of valuable material in a brief space—an amateur, he is none the less a talented observer. The great weakness of *Guder og Fedre*, from the anthropological point of view, would seem to be the failure to localize precisely the customs and rites described; an occasional reference, chiefly in the captions of the photographs, to Ambohimanga and other villages, is given, and such vague indications as 'the northern part of Tanala tribal territory, and the southern part of Betsimisaraka'. Such terms as 'highlander' and 'forest folk' may mislead those unfamiliar with the area, implying generalizations of precisely the sort which Pastor Ruud apparently wishes to avoid, when he says, 'It is clear that one cannot, in a short work, describe all the peoples of Madagascar . . .', and proceeds to limit himself to that region which he knows best.

Pastor Ruud's careful definition of the terms 'pagan' and 'primitive', however, merits no such criticism. Nor will he arouse opposition from anthropologists when he sets forth the hypothesis, out of which this work apparently grew, that religion cannot be viewed as a detached phenomenon, independent of the other institutions of a culture. And, though one might wish for a more detailed analysis of the economic aspect of the culture, his picture of native life as neither 'idyllic' nor particularly ' quaint' is convincing.

H. D. GUNN

*Colonial Policy and Practice; A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India*. By J. S. FURNIVALL, 1948. Cambridge University Press. 36s. net.

At the present time, when fundamental principles of 'colonial policy' are more than ever at stake, comparative study of the problems of overseas territories is most necessary. It induces us to realize differences in circumstances as well as differences in the way of approach. It enables us to see more clearly the aims to be pursued and the methods to be followed.

Such comparative study is especially valuable if, as is the case in the above-mentioned book, it is the work of a highly experienced colonial expert like Mr. J. S. Furnivall, formerly Commissioner of Settlements and Land Records in Burma. The author is well known as an authority on Indonesian problems. His book *Netherlands India, a Study in Plural Economy*, published in 1939 by the Cambridge University Press, is one of the best studies by foreigners on this part of the world, now more than ever in the limelight. He has an intimate knowledge of both the countries whose administrations he compares. After teaching at Cambridge



he went back to Burma as Adviser for Planning. His judgement of the British administration in Burma, which he criticizes with some bitterness, has not become more favourable in the course of the years.

A review of this interesting book would not be appropriate in a journal specially concerned with Africa if African problems were not taken into account in it throughout. Burma and Netherlands India are considered as prototypes—Burma of a system of direct rule, Netherlands India of a system of indirect rule. 'Since Burma and Java furnish extreme types of direct and indirect rule, and of development by native and by western enterprise, the comparison between them would seem to furnish a useful starting point for a more general enquiry into colonial policy and practice' (p. 280).

On almost every page of this book of about 550 pages the primary importance of economics is stressed. 'Colonial relations are primarily economic and, although pronouncements on colonial policy will be framed in terms congenial to national traditions, colonial practice is conditioned by the economic environment, and it is this, rather than any national philosophy of empire, which determines the choice between direct and indirect rule' (p. 277).

The author adheres to the theory of 'Plural Economy', as the sub-title of his earlier book indicates. According to his conception, the tropical countries are characterized by the *plurality* of their society, i.e. the living together and mutual influence of different races and peoples, which nevertheless remain socially separated and have each their own distinct place in society. He does not accept the idea of 'dual economy', comprising two distinct economic systems, capitalist and pre-capitalist, with a western superstructure of business and administration imposed on the native world in which the people, so far as they are left alone, lead their own life in their own way according to a traditional scale of values in which economic values rank so low as to be negligible. Social disintegration is one of the main dangers of all tropical societies to-day, whether in the East or in Africa. The westernization of some sections of the population weakens the 'common social will', in the Far East as well as almost everywhere in Africa south of the Sahara. 'Each section in the plural society is a crowd not a community' (p. 307). In his exposé the rejected theory of 'dual economy' is as important as, or perhaps even more important than, his accepted theory of 'plural economy'. Often the diversity of races is not taken into account, especially when the author gives a survey of his programme of social education, of the development of the 'social will'. More important than his theory, however, is his clear analysis of all aspects of colonial administration. One notices everywhere the wisdom gained by long practical experience.

The introduction of the 'rule of law' has become the rule of economic law. 'The rule of law is a foundation-stone of western civilization, and should provide a far more secure basis for society than the rule of personal authority. But this is true only where the law is an expression of social will; in a tropical dependency it expresses the will of the colonial power, and is an instrument of economic development' (p. 295). And he continues: 'Even attempts to apply local law, or to embody local custom in legal codes, must fail if made in western courts according to western procedure by lawyers who, as was said formerly in Java, look on native law as a doctor looks on native medicine.' The experience in several parts of Africa is similar to the author's experience in the Far East. When he speaks of the plague of lawyers, this applies to Africa as well. 'The law breeds litigation and this, married to poverty by agrarian distress, breeds crime.' 'The substitution of the rule of custom naturally expedites the disintegration of the customary social structure. But it also reacts more directly on the social structure. The former native authorities, who could maintain order in their own way, are unable to apply western principles of rule and must be replaced by Europeans, or by native officials trained on western lines' (pp. 296-7). The dissolution of the political structure is completed by 'breaking up the village into individuals'.

Furnivall is an admirer of Dutch rule in Indonesia. He quotes an address delivered by him to a Dutch audience interested in colonial problems (*Asiatic Review*, 1935, pp. 655 ff.) in which he compares British rule in Burma and Dutch rule in Java. He summarizes there the views expressed in his present book: 'Our officers are magistrates: yours are policemen and welfare-officers. Our methods are repressive; yours are preventive. Our procedure is formal and legal; yours, informal and personal. Our civil service is an administrative machine; yours is an instrument of Government. Our aim is negative—to suppress disorder; yours is positive—to maintain order. Order—it is a word we both use frequently, but with a significant difference of context. We talk of "law and order", and you of "*rust en orde*"; but in the absence of a social conscience it is difficult to distinguish between law and the letter of the law, and between *rust* and the placidity of a good baby in its perambulator. The caricature which depicts your system as a *baboe*, a nursemaid, and ours as a *babu*, a clerk, does emphasize a difference in vital principle. You try to keep a man from going wrong; we make it unpleasant for him if he does go wrong. You believe in protection and welfare; we believe in law—and liberty' (pp. 272-3).

The criterion by which all work of progress has to be judged is 'creative will'. On autonomy the author remarks: 'The problem of conferring autonomy on a tropical dependency is not merely a problem of mechanical contrivance, of ingeniously constructing political machinery that can be worked by natives, or despite native opposition; it is a problem of creative will. In the colonial power there must be an impulse to create a tropical society capable of political autonomy, and in the dependency a society capable of responding to this impulse, a society with a common social will that accepts the conditions of the modern world. This is so obvious that it would not be worth saying if its implications were not so generally disregarded' (p. 466).

No serious student of problems of African administration can afford to neglect this valuable book especially the more general chapters viii-xiii: Colonial Policy; Welfare: Land and Labour; Welfare: Health and Education; Progress, Welfare, and Autonomy; Reintegration; International Collaboration.

P. J. IDENBURG

*The Sorcerer's Apprentice; A Journey through East Africa.* By ELSPETH HUXLEY. 1948. London: Chatto and Windus. Pp. xviii+366, maps, plates. 18s. net.

KARAMOJA has a 30-in. rainfall but its soil is dry and infertile. The Governor of Uganda, remembering what had been done with crops in the Hadhramaut on a 10-in. rainfall, summoned an expert. The expert advised irrigation by dam-water. The local District Officer was pessimistic: the Karamojong would never keep the dams up without compulsion. 'So', says Mrs. Huxley, 'human nature will keep butting in.'

Mrs. Huxley's East African kaleidoscope has this basic pattern: the intractability of human nature. It is as intractable in East Africa as anywhere else in the world. More intractable than elsewhere? No, is Mrs. Huxley's answer in effect, but more spectacularly intractable. Continuous and deadly overstocking, overcropping, soil erosion, malnutrition, malaria, plant pests, trypanosomiasis, rinderpest: science has given us weapons to combat, if not completely dispatch, all these problems. Nomads, proud warriors, superstitious farmers, illiterate migrant labourers, literate and lazy townees, pagans, Mohammedans, Africans, Indians, Arabs, Europeans: these are the people who must hold and use these weapons; and use them not once but continually, not separately but in co-operation with one another, if they are to survive and thrive in 'this loveliest of countries'. Mrs. Huxley is appalled at the enormity of the task and the weakness of the human material, and throws up her hands in despair: 'one gropes for conclusions without reward; it is all too vast, too quickly-changing, too inchoate. The questions buzz all round one's head.'



All this is written with consummate journalistic skill. We have had other reports of the same type and scope. It is certainly more thematic and more penetrating than Negley Farson's *Behind God's Back*. In the discipline of its descriptions it recalls another Huxley appreciation of the African scene, Dr. Julian Huxley's *Africa View*, and is in many ways a brilliant sequel to that first gallant attempt to relate the problems of Africa to each other and to the rest of the world. Curiously enough, there is a hint of the philosophy of yet another Huxley. 'Ours is a policy of sublimation, not of common sense. . . . Its real object is less to turn dreams into reality than to shake an incubus off the back of the soul. . . . In the long run only one victory matters and that is over ourselves.' This is very much what Aldous Huxley might have said had he chosen a Kenya rather than a California retreat.

*The Sorcerer's Apprentice* will be unwelcome reading for any who may still think that Africa's problems can be solved by a groundnut scheme, a mass-education campaign, and a burst of goodwill. But it will be read with profit and enjoyment by all who wish for a lively and well-informed review of the present situation in East Africa. P. H. CANHAM

*Nuer-English Dictionary*. By THE REV. FATHER J. KIGGEN. Drukkeri van het Missiehuis, Steyl bij Tegelen (Nederland). Pp. 346. 10s. 6d. net.

THIS is a monumental piece of work dealing with a very difficult Nilotic language, and Father Kiggen is to be congratulated on his treatment of both orthographical and lexicographical problems.

The orthography of Nuer has been a source of difficulty for many years in the Southern Sudan, though the recent decision to accept the Thiang dialect as standard has helped considerably. Even so, the difficulties of establishing a consistent representation of words with the use of a limited alphabet must have been very great, but the author appears to have arrived at an excellent and workable standard, which should serve the language and literature for many years to come. Fortunately he had the pioneer work of Father Crazzolaro (*Outlines of a Nuer Grammar*) on which to base his orthographic compromises. For the sake of orthographists faced with similar problems, these are set out below.

The main phonetic features of Nuer are as follows:

1. A complicated system of vowel qualities. Fortunately the inclusion of the 'open' vowel letters *ε* and *ο* in the 'Rejaf' alphabet has given a sufficiently wide base for practical phonemic grouping. It would be calamitous to try to narrow this base, as the laws of sound-change, on which the appreciation of tense and case depend, could not then be expressed. Seven vowels are obviously a working minimum.
2. A complicated system of vowel length, in which *three* degrees of length are operative, with semantic and morphological functions. Father Kiggen has had to compromise here, and use double vowels only in the case of really long vowels. (One may compare Father Crazzolaro's practice of writing double vowels for half-long sounds in Acholi—since found impracticable and now abandoned in standard Acholi.)
3. A complicated consonant system, in which each explosive consonant category has four forms:

Exploded unvoiced:	p	th	t	c	k
Unexploded unvoiced:	p'	th'	t'	c'	k'
Exploded voiced:	b	dh	d	j	g
Fricative unvoiced:	f	θ	t̪	ç	h
Fricative voiced:	v	ð	-	y	ɣ

all intimately linked in the morphology of the language. Again a compromise has had to be sought with a minimum of phonetic characters (the author allows himself *t̪* and *ç*

as well as the 'Rejaf' letter y), the only mistake being the writing of unexploded th as t.

4. A complicated intonation system, which is, however, simpler than in Shilluk and Dinka.
5. A 'breathy' voice system, which also has semantic and morphological connotations, as in Shilluk and Dinka. These two aspects, unlike Father Crazzolaro, he entirely ignores—wisely from the point of view of a standard orthography and general 'lay' readability—unfortunately from the point of view of accurate information on Nuer and Nilotic languages in general.

From the lexicographical point of view the book may well serve as a model for other Nilotic dictionaries. In the setting out of the words the author has followed Fr. Crazzolaro's inspiration and given us the Genitive, Locative, and Plural forms of each noun recorded. Verbs are recorded under their 3rd pers. sg. pres. indic. form, and the following other forms are given in each instance: 1st pers. pl. pres. indic., neg. participle, affirmative participle, infinitive or verbal noun. This approach seems to me the correct one. The 1st pers. pl. shows the direction of normal sound-change in verb conjugation, whereas the participles and verbal nouns are usually unpredictable. (A rather similar approach seems indicated for Dinka, viz. the present indicative stem, followed by a stem indicating the direction of sound-change, then the participles and verbal noun. In Acholi, on the other hand, Father Crazzolaro was right in classifying verbs in their infinitive forms.)

In addition there are many examples to illustrate both the common and the idiomatic use of the greater proportion of the entries. The author's English expressions might have benefited by editing in a few cases. In particular his attempts on pages 9 and 14 to equate Nuer sounds with English sounds are so bad as to be misleading and should be ignored by the reader. Father Kiggen's phonetic ability evidently does not extend to English, and he would have been better advised to draw his comparisons from his own language, Dutch. The overall accuracy of his Nuer material, however, which I have checked with my own field notes, is beyond question; in fact, as the author admits in his introduction, a great deal of it was originally collected by Father Crazzolaro, whose phonetic competence is well known.

A. N. TUCKER

### SHORTER NOTICES

*Agriculture in the Sudan.* Edited by J. D. TOTHILL, C.M.G., D.S.C., B.S.A. 1948. London: Oxford University Press. Pp. 974, maps and plates. 42s. net.

THIS comprehensive volume includes studies of all aspects of agricultural practice and development in the Sudan, each paper being written by an expert in the particular field. The subjects dealt with include climate, vegetation, geology, revenue from land and crops, the nature and origin of the soils of the Sudan, transport, nutrition, education, and systems of land tenure. There are sections dealing with the historical background, with various experimental enterprises, and with such special aspects of the subject as irrigation, animal foodstuffs, organization of research, locusts, weeds, fertilizers, and manures. The concluding section is devoted to accounts of each Province, giving details of the geographical features, the distribution of population and its ethnic varieties, administrative structure, statistics relating to crop production, rainfall and water supplies, and descriptions of recent agricultural developments and of plans for the future.

The book is illustrated by numerous plates, maps, and tables, and contains a glossary of vernacular words and an extensive bibliography. In his introduction the editor, Dr.



Tothill, Principal of Gordon Memorial College, describes the book as being 'an authoritative but non-technical work of reference containing a number of background chapters all of which help the reader to understand the varied sorts of agriculture practised in a country that extends from rainless desert to tropical rain forest; from the trade-wind zone to the doldrums; from irrigation to rain agriculture; from settled areas to places where only Bedouin can live. . . . In scope the book is intended to give a picture of progress or otherwise in the agricultural life of the country from the time of Lord Kitchener's re-occupation in 1898 to June 1945.'

The volume was prepared in the belief that it would be of value 'not only to persons directly concerned with shaping policy but also to many people working in the Sudan, and that it might also help people who do not know the Sudan intimately but who are interested in local problems'.

Thanks to its clear and non-technical style and to the many and attractive photographs, the book should be of interest to the general reader, as it will certainly be a source of valuable information to all who are concerned with the agricultural development of African territories.

*The Sick African.* By MICHAEL GELFAND, M.B., Ch.B. (Cape Town), M.R.C.P. (Lond.), D.M.R. (Eng.). 1948. Stewart Printing Company, Cape Town. Pp. 699. 38s.

IN this new edition, the book first published in 1943 has been almost entirely rewritten and much additional matter included. In his preface the author points out that the book is not intended as a text-book but 'rather as a guide to those working among the Natives'; although intended primarily for the medical profession, it seeks to be of assistance to missionaries and African medical orderlies. Diseases and conditions peculiar to the tropical environment receive full treatment, but Dr. Gelfand is concerned to point out that a knowledge of tropical diseases is not the most important qualification for the practice of medicine in Africa. The African is as liable to contract pneumonia, tuberculosis, heart disease, and other common diseases as is the European, and therefore a knowledge of general medicine is the first necessity for a doctor practising among the natives of Africa. The author indicates certain aspects of the African's environment and mental outlook which affect his liability to disease and also his behaviour in sickness. The book includes a number of illustrations and a very full, classified bibliography.

*Equipping Africa.* By L. J. LEWIS. London: Edinburgh House Press. Pp. 42. 1s. net.

THIS is the second in a series of 'Education Overseas' pamphlets sponsored by the Edinburgh House Press. Its purpose is to give a short and simple account of educational development in British Colonial Africa. After a very brief description of the physical and social background, the author outlines three main stages in the development of education in Africa, in which the appointment of the Advisory Committee of Native Education in British Tropical African Dependencies in 1925 was an important landmark. Reference is also made to the memorandum on Mass Education (1944) and the report of the Royal Commission on Higher Education (1945). The book includes descriptions of various types of schools and teacher-training institutions; vocational and special training, agricultural, medical, and theological education are briefly dealt with and the parts played by Native authorities and by African voluntary efforts are touched on. One section is concerned with probable developments and future plans, and the function of missions in education is discussed. A short bibliography is included.

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Prepared in co-operation with Mr. H. G. A. Hughes, the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa, School of Oriental and African Studies, London; and Mr. Kenneth Kirkwood of the Natal University College, South Africa.

Entries in this number cover approximately publications received from October 1948 to January 1949. A note on abbreviations of the titles of journals will be found at the end of the bibliography.

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## ABBREVIATIONS OF TITLES OF PERIODICALS USED IN THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Human Problems	Journal of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (Livingstone).	IFAN	Institut Français d'Afrique Noire (Dakar).
IBLA	Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes (Tunis).	Tanganyika Notes	Tanganyika Notes and Records.

Other titles are abbreviated in accordance with the International Code.

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